"THE LEPER'S FATE, or A TRAGEDY IN HIGH LIFE," BEGINS NEXT WEEK

THE CHICAGO LEDGER

VOL. XXXI, NO. 48. CHICAGO, ILL., SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 28, 1903. SINGLE COPIES 5 CENTS.

THE ROMERO DAGGER; or, The Canyon Diablo Mystery.

By HATTIE HORNER LOUTHAN

Begun in No. 47, Nov. 21. Subscriptions can begin with that issue, or back copies can be procured from news stands, or our agents, or by mail from office of publication.

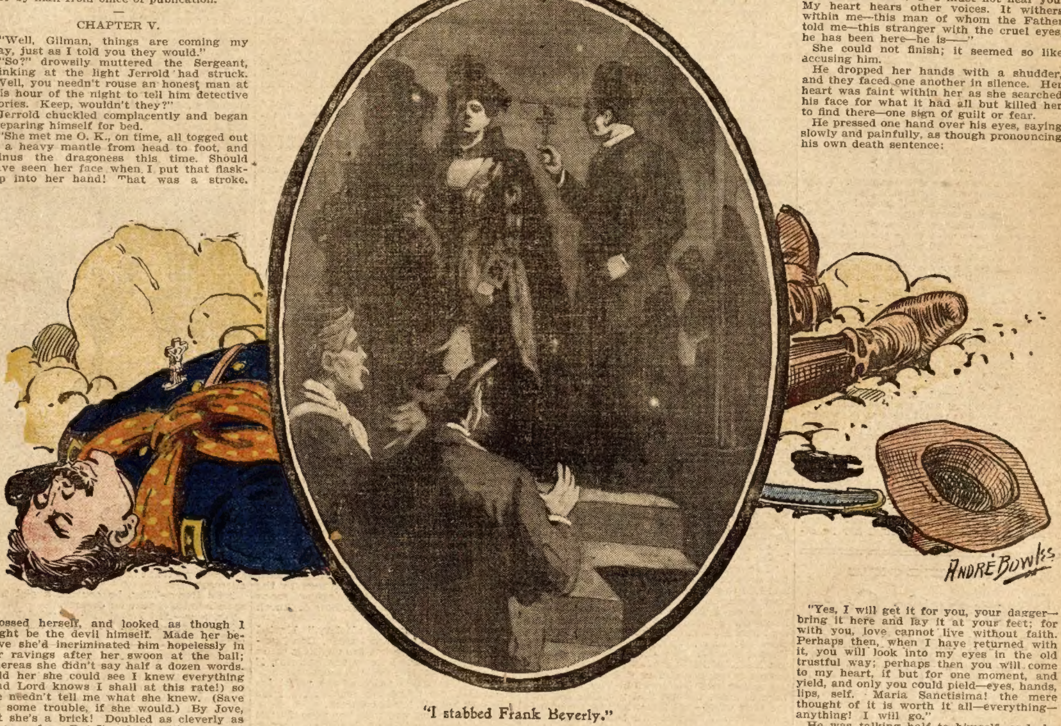
CHAPTER V.

"Well, Gilman, things are coming my way, just as I told you they would."

"So?" drowsily muttered the Sergeant, blinking at the light Jerrold had struck. "Well, you needn't rouse an honest man at this hour of the night to tell him detective stories. Keep, wouldn't they?"

Jerrold chuckled complacently and began preparing himself for bed.

"She met me O. K., on time, all togged out in a heavy mantle from head to foot, and minus the dragoness this time. Should have seen her face when I put that flask-top into her hand! That was a stroke. Crossed herself, and looked as though I might be the devil himself. Made her believe she'd incriminated him hopelessly in her ravings after her swoon at the ball; whereas she didn't say half a dozen words. Told her she could see I knew everything (and Lord knows I shall at this rate!) so she needn't tell me what she knew. (Save me some trouble, if she would.) By Jove, but she's a brick! Doubled as cleverly as a young fox. But I've dealt with a woman or two before. I let her persuade me that that dagger was right here in their own home, and then said, as I was hard up, if she'd give it to me (that I had understood it was heavy with real stones) I'd agree not to mention what I knew against her cousin, would leave Santa Fe and the Territory for good. At that she began pulling off her rings and bracelets and things, pressing them upon me, eagerly enough, and vouchsafing the information that grandfather had a great deal of money. But I said modestly that the dagger would answer. She thought a moment, her innocent eyes downcast, and said she believed her sister had mislaid it. Then I repeated, with my own peculiar emphasis, that the dagger must answer, and after another moment's thought she said she'd try to find it; she felt sure she could, as no search had been made for it. Would a week from to-night do—same meeting place? She gives herself a week, which more than convinces me that the jeweled dagger was the death-dealing weapon, and that somehow it was left at the scene of the crime. So I'm through with Santa Fe for the present, and shall leave for Diablo by that early train. Want to get the lay of the land and secure Beverley's traps. Let them try to recover that dagger—I'm ready for the first move! Ah, yes, Senorita, I shall quit Santa Fe and the Territory for good quite soon now, but your beloved cousin and betrothed, Senor Don Manuel Romero, will accompany me!"



"I stabbed Frank Beverly."

CHAPTER VI.

The pale daylight was just beginning to make objects discernible in the placita, when Mercedes arose from her couch, smoothed her crumbled draperies, and making her way noiselessly to the fountain, began laving her hands in its cool spray.

The door of Carma's room opened and Manuel came out, closing it softly behind him. There was a look on his face she had never seen there, nor on any other face, and her woman's heart took alarm at once. His face was deathly pale and haggard from his all-night vigil, but the expression was indescribable—anguish, triumph, despair, commingled.,

He came straight to her, took her wet, cold hands and pressed them first to his heart, then to his lips, gazing at her in the semi-darkness with a passionate wistfulness. She answered his look with one of inquiry, indicating Carma's door; yet all the time she was striving against a heavy sense of dread that was oppressing her.

"She is quite herself again after the fright my thoughtless actions gave her, and she is sleeping, like the pretty infant she is. Do not refer to the matter again; she has learned a lesson about night-wandering; and, besides, I have scolded her sufficiently."

Had she looked up, his pale lips and quivering nostrils would have belied his light tone; but her eyes were downcast, and she was trying to withdraw her hands. He held her fast, drawing her nearer and nearer to him.

"Manuel, you are forgetting!" she warned, shrinking back.

"Nay, corazon mio," he whispered, "I talked with uncle on our outward journey, and he is willing to nullify that most foolish compact made for two unwilling children long ago. Besides, if it were not a farce longer to keep up this hollow semblance of a betrothal, it were a crime before the Most High, when all my soul cries for one and one only; when there is but one face in all my dreams, one voice in all my world; when the beads slipping along the rosary murmur only 'Love, love, love!' when the Madonna herself looks down upon me with your eyes—Mercedes! Mercedes!"

"Manuel Romero, what are you saying? Think of Carma."

"God alone knows what I would do for Carma. I have told her all this night, told her gently, tenderly, as my sister. She has known. Is she not a woman? Can she not interpret tones, however well modulated, glances, however studied? Does any woman crave cold kisses from lips that are burning for another's? Would she lie against a breast that is aching for another beloved form? You are a woman. Answer!"

He was breathing hurriedly and crushing her hands in his. Yet her hands were cold and her face turned aside. Was the sense that chilled her one of fear for his safety, or was it distrust? She trembled violently, as from cold, and was saying brokenly:

"I cannot listen—I—I must not hear you. My heart hears other voices. It withers within me—this man of whom the Father told me—this stranger with the cruel eyes, he has been here—he is——"

She could not finish; it seemed so like accusing him.

He dropped her hands with a shudder, and they faced one another in silence. Her heart was faint within her as she searched his face for what it had all but killed her to find there—one sign of guilt or fear.

He pressed one hand over his eyes, saying slowly and painfully, as though pronouncing his own death sentence:

"Yes, I will get it for you, your dagger—bring it here and lay it at your feet; for with you, love cannot live without faith. Perhaps then, when I have returned with it, you will look into my eyes in the old trustful way; perhaps then you will come to my heart, if but for one moment, and yield, and only you could pield—eyes, hands, lips, self. Maria Sanctisima! the mere thought of it is worth it all—everything—anything! I will go."

He was talking half to himself, and she shrank away from him, bewildered and alarmed. The faint whistle of a locomotive broke the stillness. He pulled himself together with a start, repeating:

"I will bring it to you. I must go. In a week I will be here with it."

Of what was he talking? What did he mean? How dark it had grown! How weary she was—how utterly weary! If only merciful unconsciousness would come to her as it had to Carma! She wanted to tell him to get nothing, do nothing, go nowhere for her; but, somehow, instead of his face, there arose now the face of her dead friend, with the candles above it; and she could hear nothing save the Padre's litany for the dying, and the Sister's responses.

"In a week," she murmured in a strange voice, "in a week, Father. Give me only a week, and on Saturday I will give you——"

He clutched her arm in a vise-grip, shaking her till her reeling senses returned.

"Promise me—on your soul's salvation, on your hope of Heaven, that you will not answer him till I come! Struggle with all your strength against this inherited brand, this curse, this fear of madness! Think on it—I, free, unconditionally, absolutely free, and you—behind convent bars, lost to me forever! Promise me! Repeat it! 'I swear, here and now else, as God hears me, that day shall come for neither of us!'"

He had raised his voice to a menace and as he ended the door of Carma's room opened and Dolores came out; but he lifted a warning hand, and she stood still.

"Swear it!" he commanded, thrusting her crucifix toward the bewildered girl.

Mechanically she kissed the Image, repeating the oath.

At once he fell to her feet, clasping them, caressing them; then, staggering up, he rushed from the court and the house.

"Stop him! Oh, do not let him go!" cried Mercedes, tottering forward into the arms of the faithful Dolores. "Bring him back—tell him, Madre mia! I love him! I love him!"

The week dragged slowly along, a rosary of seven days beading through the fingers of Pain. To Mercedes the days seemed interminable, the nights without end. Carma rallied bravely the first day, but after that did not leave her bed. The elder sister scarcely quitted her side. The sick girl was quiet, and seemed to sleep much, but often the quivering of the closed eyelids bespoke an alert, strained consciousness.

The subject nearest the heart of both was not mentioned. Carma did not ask for Manuel, nor speak his name save in the slight delirium attending her fever periods, when she would continually implore his forgiveness and protest her love for him.

Nor did Mercedes talk of him. Where was he gone? She could not conjecture; and who was there to ask, since there was no one who knew? That he had gone into danger she did not doubt, recalling his words; and her heart smote her when she thought of his mission. And yet, whatever the hardship, whatever the risk, did not the end justify the means? Was it not worth all to have his name, their proud old name, cleared of the slightest suspicion of stain?

Over and over again she conned his every word, every tone, inflection, look; and the memory of them and the meaning of them thrilled her deepest being. The warm blood would mount to her face, and her heart would throb painfully. But the next moment she would turn cold at the thought that never, through it all, had he vouchsafed the simple words, "I am innocent." Why the omission? Could he not view the situation from the outside?

Over again she asked herself these questions; over again tried to untangle the threads of circumstantial evidence that enmeshed him, till her brain grew numb and refused to act, and the lines of that song kept recurring with irritating persistence, beating themselves in upon her sub-consciousness all the day:

"I know not, I ask not, if guilt's in thy heart,
I but know that I love thee, whatever thou art!"

She avoided the church all week, except the day her friend was buried; but Father Cadena and Sister Celeste or Sister Angelina came daily to the sick-chamber. When Mercedes observed at the bedside these beings from a world apart from her own, when she turned from her own heart-burnings, uncertainties and tumult to these consecrated ones with their peaceful faces, their calm, untroubled minds and forgotten past, she would almost sigh for the week's end and all that her decision might bring—peace, tranquillity, separation from the world, meditation, prayer.

And then, soft and thrilling, his words would sound to her soul: "One face in all my dreams, one voice in all my world," and she would wonder if even cell walls could be thick enough to shut from her that deep, sweet voice, or even bars be stout enough—and then she would prostrate herself before the Image in the alcove, and pray feverishly, desperately.

The week dragged slowly along. The strain of watching and suspense began to tell upon her. She would start at the slightest sounds. Carma, too, seemed to be listening for something, and would waken at the trill of a bird or the rustle of a leaf. She slept lightly, and her fever increased.

Mercedes took the minimum of rest, smothering her own anxiety in an assumed cheerfulness. On Thursday she learned through Felipe that Mr. Jerrold had been out of town all week, leaving on the early Sunday morning train, no one knew where. After this it seemed as though her heart-strings must snap under the tension; but her cup was not yet full.

DR. SHOOP'S

Rheumatic Cure

Costs Nothing if It Fails.

Any honest person who suffers from Rheumatism is welcome to this offer. For years I searched everywhere to find a specific for Rheumatism. For nearly 20 years I worked to this end. At last, in Germany, my search was rewarded. I found a costly chemical that did not disappoint me as other Rheumatic prescriptions had disappointed physicians everywhere.

I do not mean that Dr. Shoop's Rheumatic Cure can turn bony joints into flesh again. That is impossible. But it will drive from the blood the poison that causes pain and swelling, and then that is the end of Rheumatism. I know this so well that I will furnish for a full month my Rheumatic Cure on trial. I cannot cure all cases within a month. It would be unreasonable to expect that. But most cases will yield within 30 days. This trial treatment will convince you that Dr. Shoop's Rheumatic Cure is a power against Rheumatism—a potent force against disease, that is irresistible.

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I have no samples. Any mere sample that can affect chronic Rheumatism must be drugged to the verge of danger. I use no such drugs, for it is dangerous to take them. You must get the disease out of the blood. My remedy does that even in the most difficult, obstinate cases. It has cured the oldest cases that I ever met, and in all of my experience, in all of my 2,000 tests, I never found another remedy that would cure one chronic case in ten.

Write me and I will send you the book. Try my remedy for a month, for it can't harm you anyway. If it fails the loss is mine.

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Mild cases not chronic are often cured by one or two bottles. At all druggists.

Saturday morning came at last, and as the dawn crept up from the east, she knelt before the Image and poured her devout thanks that the longed-for day had come, the day when he would return; for he had said it, and he had never broken his lightest word.

To her surprise, Carma insisted upon being dressed and upon sitting up. She was better, almost well, she declared. Mercedes dressed her in a white morning gown, and sat with her, reading and chatting throughout the long day. Each seemed waiting for something, starting and straining their ears at sound of horses or carriage-wheels; yet reading and commenting on their books, and giving no sign.

The day passed quietly. There were a few solicitous callers. Toward evening Dolores retired, Luisa coming to assist Mercedes. The shades of night deepened. Would Carma disrobe and lie down? No; Luisa would draw her chair to the south window for the evening air. But when night was fully come, she still sat there, a fold of the parted curtain in her hand, her eyes fixed on the gate at the end of the walk.

Lights were brought, and Mercedes resumed the book of Moorish tales, pronouncing the words uncomprehendingly for ears that heard not! Ten strokes boomed from the cathedral bell, then the half hour. Carma stirred. Would not Mercedes leave her now and take some air or rest? She herself was weary of the book and the lights. Her sister demurred. Was Carma really better? and might she not need her? Ah, so much better; and was not Luisa there, and Dolores within call?

So Mercedes, going to her own room for her mantle, passed out into the still, warm night. The town was sleeping, the streets and the roadways were deserted. An old moon looked down from an overcast sky, and the wind was complaining to the leaves.

Involuntarily her steps turned toward San Miguel's, past its straggling graves and into the dense shadows that clustered near its open door. Within, pale candles lighted the altar before which knelt a solitary figure; and weird shadows flickered over the wide interior, among the pictures and images, along the irregular white walls and the massive overhead beams.

"Ah, yes! it was Saturday, and the day was all but gone. Father Cadena was waiting within; she was waiting without. What would the morrow find? What momentous questions would the next hour decide! She drew closer into the blackness against the outer wall, pressing her hot forehead against the cold adobe. She tried to pray, but her thoughts were distracted and confused.

The three-quarters struck from the near bell, muffling the sound of quick steps behind her.

"Mercedes!"

"Manuel! Thank God!"

He stood before her, hatless, disheveled—and empty-handed. She moved nearer him, but he drew back along the wall toward the sunken grave at the church corner, holding up his empty hands in a helpless way.

"I brought it, and yet I have it not. I am here to tell you. There is but little time, for they are just behind me. I came from Lamy by the fleetest horse. Hear me, for the time is brief, and it must not be here that they take me. As well to meet them and give myself up, for escape is impossible, resistance useless. And you—you will go in here to the Padre and pledge yourself to Heaven and your life to prayer—to prayer for me, dishonored! My God, why hast Thou forsaken me?"

His head sank forward upon his breast, and she stood gazing at him in horror. As she gazed, the cloud-hunted moon peered from above and flung the shadow of the heavy cross on the church-tower just above his bowed head. A black cloud blotted out one arm of the cross, the other arm extending directly over him; and the silhouette which the moon cast upon the white sand was of a criminal beneath a gibbet! A shuddering sob broke from her as she stretched both arms toward him.

"Manuel, Manuel! You promised, and this is the day!"

"I brought it. Dios mio! did I not go to the ends of earth, into the depths of night and hell to pluck it from his decaying heart? And from that noisome cave, and across the miles, I brought it—followed, hunted, betrayed. At home, I flung it down with my cloak for a moment to find you; but you were not there. Carma's door was bolted, the house dead. Not a footfall could I hear, yet back to the court, and both cloak and dagger were gone. Nor did search reveal them, nor one living soul. There was no time to stay; I must find you and tell you ere they came—tell you why my promise is unfulfilled. And you will believe me."

His head was erect now, and with the last words the old proud look was on his face. Then he came nearer to her in the gloom of the wall, and said in a low, firm tone:

"What is done is done. Fortify your soul for what is yet to be. There will be an arrest this night, then trial, condemnation, the extreme penalty. The luster of our name will be dimmed. There will be no defense—none; there must be no effort on my behalf. Through it all, you will remain to sustain and comfort uncle and Carma and——"

"Never, never! Not with any one but you, not anywhere but by your side: If an arrest, here; if condemnation, sharing it; if the penalty, still together. Where thou lodgest, I will lodge; where thou diest, I will die. What is done is done. If you are guilty, then I; for my soul is one with yours, nor can live apart. Who am I, Manuel Romero, but the woman whose love you have compelled? And what are guilt and death to Love?"

She was wringing her hands together; her words were broken and stammering, as though wrenched from her by some impelling force. As he heard them, even at such a moment, the light of a great triumph broke over his haggard face. He stood motionless, apart from her, struggling for self-control.

"Saints on high!' he muttered; "but for such words would a man, guilty or not guilty, forfeit paradise for the torments of lowest hell. What can matter after this? Now, God forgive me! but I cannot, will not— Lift up your head, my beloved, my own, believe me and be comforted. For, though all must transpire as I have said, yet—I am innocent!"

With a low, glad cry she was in his arms, her own arms drawing her closer, all her love in the one first embrace. And he held her there in a long ecstasy. Minutes went by unheeded; past and future, dishonor and danger, were alike forgotten. To them there was nothing in all the world save love and each other. It was as though time were done, and eternity commenced, as he held her to him, murmuring endearing names in their own sweet language, and pressing long kisses on her forehead, her eyelids, her mouth. Smoke and flame passed before his eyes and the burst of a triumphal anthem was in his ears. He saw nothing, heard nothing, till a woman cast herself in the sand at their feet, and Luisa's agonized voice pierced the night air:

"Carma! Carma! She is gone—we cannot find her! Ay de mi! Ay de mi!"

Before a word could be spoken, three horsemen came clattering to the church door. One dismounted and stepped into the square of light cast by the candles, for the moon was obscured. It was Jerrold. Manuel advanced to meet him, saying in a rapid undertone:

"I am here whom you are seeking. I will go with you. Come!"

But Mercedes sprang between them, clinging to her lover, who strove gently to put her aside.

"He is not guilty. A Romero could not commit such a crime. We will prove this; only grant us time. Manana—tomorrow, tomorrow! For oh! Senor, our sister, ill, perhaps dying, is out somewhere in this night! May he not, will you not, aid us in finding her? As you love your own sister, your mother, your soul—help us!"

"That I will, for she it is whom I would take—Senorita Carma Romero, mistress of, murderer of, Francis Beverley!"

"She is here!" cried a thrilling voice, and a small figure, enveloped in a man's heavy cloak, glided through their midst and faced them in the church door, the weird light of the candles haloing her yellow hair. "She is here, and she is all that you have said. I killed him because, having won my all, he refused me what is any woman's right—the name and protection of the man to whom she has given herself."

"She is mad—you can see she is mad," broke in Romero, thrusting Mercedes toward Luisa and keeping himself between the detective and the church door; "she saw me strike the blow, and the light unseated her reason. She has raved thus ever since. Leave her to the women. I have said I am your prisoner. Let us be off, man!"

"It is false!' cried Carma; "I struck him myself, deep, deep, and he did not utter a sound. It was in the cave below the bridge and to the left as you descend. My cousin did not know the whereabouts of such a cave until I told him a week ago, when I sent him for the dagger. I had begged that dagger of him to dig flower-roots, and he met me that night, anxious because of my long stay. Frank Beverley went down to get the water for my sister, and I followed him. I had warned him about trifling——"

"That I can prove," quietly spoke the detective, "since I have recovered Lieutenant Beverley's papers with two or three of your letters. Come!"

But Romero still stood between them in a threatening attitude.

"Fool! you are as mad as she. Could she descend that frightful chasm? Could such as she drag him into that cavern, even if she could deal a blow like that? Touch her not! Come not one step toward her! I tell you I killed him. We had quarreled, because—because she is my promised wife. Is it not true, Carma, monina?"

He turned to the girl in the doorway, holding out his arms, a world of eloquent entreaty in his dark face. Carma hesitated, then retreated almost into the arms of Father Cadena, who had come down the aisle and was standing a spectator to this extraordinary scene—the tall form of the detective in the half shadow; Carma facing him in the doorway, pleading her own guilt; Manuel between them, desperately trying to shield her; Mercedes and Luisa to one side, clinging together; horses and men in the background, while the struggling moon flung over them the black shadow of church and cross.

"This is nonsense, tomfoolery," blurted out the detective. "Stand aside, Don Manuel Romero! I have not the slightest claim upon your person. I know my business, if that girl did at first mislead me."

The authoritative voice of the priest interrupted. He lifted the crucifix from his side and held it toward Carma.

"My daughter, will you lay your fingers on the bleeding feet of Christ and affirm what you have said—that you did indeed commit this most horrible crime?"

Manuel gave a sharp cry of warning and sprang toward her, but Jerrold caught his extended arm in a grip of steel, while the priest, holding out the crucifix, towered above the cowering girl like an accusing angel.

One white arm sprang from beneath the long cloak, the fingers touched the holy symbol, and her voice was steady as she repeated:

"I will. I do. I stabbed Frank Beverley, and then afterward——"

She paused, for she found herself standing alone, the whole group having for the instant fallen back. Even Father Cadena recoiled, the cross falling from his fingers.

Flinging Romero aside, the detective strode toward her. Then for the first time she realized the gravity of her situation, the utter hopelessness of her committal, for she cast one frightened glance round the group, wavered for an instant between her cousin and the Padre, but in her extremity ran and fell upon her knees before the Virgin in the niche near the door.

"Maria Sanctisima!"

As the crw rang through the church she flung off the cloak; there was a flash of steel in the candle-light, and the cry ended in a gurgling sob.

Jerrold struck the weapon from her hand, and it fell ringing to the wall; but too late, for a red tide was streaming from her breast as she fell back into the priest's arms.

When she opened her eyes her gaze went past the agonized faces of Manuel and Mercedes bending above her, past Luisa wailing beside her, and to the detective who stood at her feet.

"You were not there, Senor, when I took it to you. You did not keep the tryst, else all had been well. Ay, it has pearls and rubies and sapphires on the handle. Take it, it is yours now. Only go, and leave these two in peace to their love."

Her eyes turned in mute pleading to the Padre. He held the holy symbol before her face, whispering rapidly in the soft Spanish:

"May the Lord have mercy on thy soul! May Christ pardon thee! I, by His authority, do release thee from every bond of crime; I do absolve thee from thy sins, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen."

She closed her eyes, and the priest began praying aloud, slipping to the floor and supporting her with one arm, while he still held the crucifix above her face.

She opened her eyes, looked bewilderedly about, and, seeing the cross and the Padre's face, murmured dreamily:

"Father, I accuse myself—of neglecting holy things—of yielding——"

"Hail Mary, full of grace," went on the priest's soft voice, filling the silence like drops of liquid gold, as he whispered the Ave into the ears of the dying girl, "pray for us sinners now, and at the hour of our death!"

Then her voice sounded out to the low accompaniment of his chant, and there was a far, fixed look in her glazing eyes.

"If only I had left the flask and brought the dagger! The waters were accursed, and followed me. But I had no other crucifix for his dead hands, and no candles, and no blessed water. But I said the Litany, every word—and I prayed—for his soul—in purgatory——"

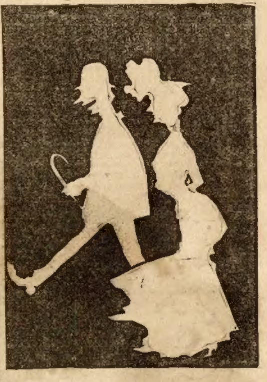
"Lord, have mercy! Christ, have mercy!" continued the Padre in earnest supplication.

"Manuel, forgive me," she breathed, closing her eyes for the last time. "You are a strong man—but poor, little Carma—Holy Mother, help me!"

"Remember, O Most Gracious Virgin Mary," triumphantly went on the fervent, unbroken plea of the priest, as he folded the limp hands over the crucifix, "that never was it known that any one who fled to thy protection, implored thy help, and sought thine intercession, was left unaided. Amen, and Amen!"

The End.

Wiser Way.



Mr. Slap—What is the secret of Gildiboy's success?

Miss Bang—Why, he courted a girl who spends $1,500 a year on dresses.

Mr. Slap—Ah! I see! He married her?

Miss Bang—Oh, no! He married her dressmaker.

Easily Found.

The fact that America is a very big country never strikes one so forcibly as when he has traveled a couple of thousand miles due west, and still finds the prairie stretching out before him. A young member of the British nobility was over here recently, accompanied by his inevitable valet, James.

They saw numerous seaboard cities, tarried for a time in Pittsburg, in Chicago, in St. Louis, and in Kansas City, and then struck out into the great West. Somewhere near the edge of Colorado the train was delayed at a small station, and the passengers got out to stretch their legs, among them his lordship and James, who seemed in a brown study.

"What's the matter?" asked his master.

"I was just thinkin', my lord," said James, "that Columbus didn't do such a bloomin' big thing when 'e discovered this 'ere country, hafter hall's said and done. 'Ow could 'e 'elp it?"

Heartless Man.

Pretty Girl—I wish twenty-five cents' worth of rat poison.

Drug Clerk—Should I send it home?

Pretty Girl—No; I'll take it.

Drug Clerk—Well, I don't object, if you'll give me five cents extra to telephone for the undertaker.

Not So Easy.

Harvey—I touched pop for twenty today to buy a camera. Think I'll touch him again tomorrow to get some plates.

Harold—Better be careful, old chap. Retouching is not always so easy in photography.

MISS PAPA.

Every morning, when the miners gathered around the shaft of the Berard Mine, in answer to the whistle, the last one to arrive was always a tall, solid-looking fellow, who held by the hand a little girl of 7 or 8. It was Michel Perron and his daughter. And always, before taking his place on the platform of the well, the man would lift the child in his arms and, kissing her heartily on both cheeks, would put her gently down again. The child cried: "Good-by, papa!" and watched him with her big, anxious eyes. When the whistle blew for the descent she clasped her little hands convulsively, crying: "Papa, papa!" until convinced that he could hear her no longer, she turned sorrowfully away to the school house, where she would spend the day.

When evening came she was the first at the opening whence the miners descended into the mine and from which Michel Perron was always the first to emerge. As at his departure, he would lift the child in his arms and she clung to him, crying: "Papa, papa!" she repeated these two syllables so often and with so much passion and feeling that the miners had nicknamed her Miss Papa.

Truly, no nickname was more fitting. Her father was all in all to her. Her mother had been dead for a long time, oh, a very long time; she could scarcely remember. She had no one but her father. All her memories were of him. For her his strong hands were gentle; for her his stern face had softened into a smile; for her sake the man had become a woman and child both. Ah! how she loved her father! and how she trembled each morning when she saw him go down into that frightful hole, whose bottom no one could see.

One day one of the miners had suddenly picked her up and held her over the opening and at the sight of the black, deep hole she had uttered a cry of terror and struggled to free herself. "Papa goes down there," she thought to herself. "Oh, what if he should never come back!"

And the next day, when Michel took her as usual in his arms and embraced her, she clung tightly to his neck and whispered:

"You will come back, won't you?"

"Why, what a question, little girl. Of course, I will."

"But tell me, papa, is it dangerous?"

"No, indeed, little 'fraid-cat."

"But—don't people sometimes—die—down there?"

"Rest easy," said Michel, laughing, "I won't die without telling you."

"Ah! good-by, papa."

Whatever her father said was absolute truth to her, and she ran off to school, assured and almost happy. But the memory of that black abyss haunted her, and each morning she watched her father descend while her heart throbbed with terror, and each night, trembling, she waited for him to come back, always fearing lest he should not come.

Was it a presentiment? Who knows?

One day a rumor suddenly spread about that an explosion had taken place down in the mine. In a moment the entrance to the mines was thronged with frightened people. Of all those who had descended in the morning, who were to come back alive?

Michel's little daughter was at school. She had not heard anything about it, and indeed, if they had spoken of it before her she would not have understood. How could she know, poor little thing, what an explosion meant? But she did know what death was; even at her age, she understood what it meant, when coming at evening to meet her father, she found the yard full of women, sobbing over the still forms, where they had been gently laid down upon the grass. For a moment she stood stupefied, then she understood. That very morning she had watched these men disappear into the black darkness; she knew them well, how many times they had embraced her; now they were lying here, dead. Would they bring back her father like them? The thought choked her, and, her hair streaming in the wind, she began to run from one group to another, calling: "Papa! papa! papa!"

There were many others who called "Papa!" but none whose voice was so despairing. One by one all the others were driven away, but no one had the heart to send her off. The poor child ran from one still form to another, stopping often as if she were afraid to recognize her father among them. But he was not among the dead. Her confidence came back to her. She grew quieter and took up her search among the living. But no, no one had seen her father. Out of the sixty miners who had gone down the shaft in the morning forty-five had returned; eleven were dead. There was only one who had not been found; it was Michel. Carefully, the rough men told her this, but she only clapped her hands, as if they had said: "You will soon see him again." Ah! she knew that he would soon come back to her, for had he not promised her:

"I will not die without telling you?"

She knew her father was alive. Children have a strong faith and they do not easily let go an idea when once it has taken a firm root. The next morning they tried once more to tell her that it was all over, that she would never see her father again, that the men had hunted through all the galleries, and searched in every corner and had not been able to find the slightest trace of him. At every remark she would only shake her head and reply, sobbing: "Please hunt for papa!"

The men shook their heads. Had they not exhausted every means of finding him? The chief engineer, the plans of the mine in his hand, had himself directed the search party; they had hunted through even the smallest nooks in the galleries. Living or dead they should have been able to find him, and they could not. The unhappy miner had been swallowed up, no one knew how or where. Industry like war, has its battles and its missing soldiers besides the dead heroes.

For forty-eight hours Miss Papa waited feverishly, without growing tired. At the sight of each human face that appeared at the opening she would start forward, and then, not seeing him for whom she waited, would fall back, while the tears streamed down her face. They did their best to take her away, but she cried so bitterly that they let her stay. She would soon be tired, they thought, pitifully, and then she would go.

But, on the morning of the third day, the child was still beside the shaft.

"Really, this must be stopped," thought the chief engineer, as he drew near to where she sat. "Come, little one, be reasonable and go home."

"Papa—please hunt for papa," she cried, eagerly.

"Alas! he is dead, child."

"No."

Miss Papa uttered this "no" with such force and energy that the engineer was struck.

"What makes you say that?" he demanded.

"He would have told me so."

"Poor little girl!" murmured the man, kindly. He signed to one of the men to carry her away. But she clung to him desperately, crying:

"Papa is not dead; I want to go down there! I will find him!"

They carried her away and placed her under good care at the school. But an hour later she was at the Berard shaft and crying: "I want to go down there! I will find him!"

The engineer was a kind-hearted man and made up his mind to satisfy her.

"After all," he said to himself, 'perhaps it will be better. When she has seen with her own eyes she will believe. And if the present crisis lasts it will kill her."

Taking her in his arms, he took his place upon the platform, and made a signal to the mechanic.

"Let her go!"

Only 8 years old, and descending into that black abyss whose very memory haunted her like a nightmare! Ah, how she loved him, her good father! The engineer felt her little hands clasp his, her head was buried on his shoulder, and two tears trickled down his neck. As soon as they were below, she loosed her hold, jumped to the ground and ran ahead, crying: "Papa! papa!"

For two hours she ran through the galleries, questioning the men whom she knew, and striking with her fist the black wall, pressing her ear to it and always crying, crying, "Papa! papa!"

The engineer—himself a father—following her with much difficulty, grew tired of explaining what he had explained twenty times before just how the explosion had taken place, and where and what had been done to recover the victims. To all that he said the child repeated: "He is alive! We must look for him!"

She would have stayed down there in the darkness forever had they not carried her up by force into the open air.

The engineer gave orders that she should be taken back to the school; and, further that if she appeared at the Berard shaft, she should be prevented from descending into the mine. His orders were carefully carried out, and the next morning when she was far from his thoughts and he was busy inspecting some new work in the mine, he felt himself seized by his coat tail. It was Miss Papa.

For the second time she had escaped from the school house, and, being refused permission to go down at the shaft, and finding no one who would take the responsibility of disobeying orders, she had slipped into an empty carrier and had gone down so into the mine.

It did not take her long to tell her story and obtain pardon. Five minutes after she resumed her search of the night before; always filled with her great faith, she listened, as she had done before, at the wall of coal, passing and repassing the same place, never despairing, never weary. The miners watched her with a pitying look, saying to each other:

"Poor little Miss Papa!"

Little Miss Papa was still searching. Suddenly the men saw her come running toward them, pale, frightened, choking. She cried: "There, down there! Papa!"

"What?" cried a miner.

"His blouse!"

"Bah! Where is it?"

"Down there!"

In a moment every one knew what she had found, and the mine was in a tumult. The child said that she had found a piece of a blue blouse in a crack; that she could not get hold of it, for it was held fast by an enormous block of coal.

"Where?" they all demanded, once more.

Miss Papa turned, hesitated, stopped, and then set off, followed by all the men. They almost lost sight of her, so fast did she run down the galleries, but soon they heard her cry:

"I have it! I have it!"

Yes; it was a piece of linen, of blue linen. It was part of a blouse. A man was there somewhere. Where could he be, and how could he have got there? No matter! The men set to work and how the picks rang out. Was ever music more beautiful! In the twinkling of an eye the wall was torn down and a large cavern appeared; lying there was the body of a man. It was Michel Perron. He had been there three days and four nights.

On every side the cries went up, but over them rang the cry of joy that burst from the lips of Miss Papa. She threw herself upon her father, clasping him in her arms and repeating over and over, "Papa! papa!"

Poor Michel was nearly gone. Exhausted from lack of food and poor air, he came back to consciousness, only to swoon away again, but he was alive. Miss Papa had spoken truly. He had not wanted to die without telling his child, and her memory had strengthened his powers of resistance. He had conquered death!

Eight days later he was up again, thin, but with returning strength and ready for work.

The night before he went back to the mine the men gave a great banquet for Miss Papa. The place of honor was for her. When she entered the room, holding Michel's hand, a great hurrah went up, shaking the very roof in its heartiness. What a clapping of hands, what laughter, and what kisses, all in honor of the little queen!

And can you guess what she replied to all this, as she smiled and clapped her own little hands?

She replied: "Papa!"

It would be hard to tell you just how she said it, but all the brave men who were there to do her honor, and with whom tears are strangers, indeed, will tell you that they cried that night.

FREE

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Disorders of the Kidneys and Bladder cause Bright's Disease, Rheumatism, Gravel, Pain in the Back, Bladder Disorders, Difficult or Too Frequent Passing of Water, Dropsy, etc. For these diseases a Positive Specific Cure is found in a new botanical discovery, the wonderful Kava-Kava Shrub, called by botanists the piper methysticum, from the Ganges River, East India. It has the extraordinary record of 1,200 hospital cures in 30 days. It acts directly on the Kidneys and cures by draining from the Blood the poisonous Uric Acid, Lithates, etc., which cause the disease.

Hon. L. A. Hopkins, of Ellsworth, Kan., writes that his limbs were swollen with Rheumatism so that he could hardly walk and had to get up every hour of the night to urinate besides having severe hemorrhage of Kidneys and Bladder but was completely cured by Alkavis. Many ladies including Mrs. Ida A. Francis, Mooresville, Ind., and Mrs. James Young, of Kent, Ohio, also testify as to its wonderful curative powers in Kidney and other disorders peculiar to women.

That you may test the value of this great discovery we will send you by mail Free, One Large Case and our book of 1,000 testimonials, only asking that when cured yourself you will recommend this sure specific to others. Address, The Church Kidney Cure Company, 484 Fourth Avenue, New York City.

* * *

COULDN'T FOOL HIM.

Doctor Was Firm and Was Right.

Many doctors forbid their patients to drink coffee but the patients still drink it on the sly and thus spoil all the doctor's efforts and keep themselves sick. Sometimes the doctor makes sure that the patient is not drinking coffee and there was a case of that kind in St. Paul where a business man said:

"After a very severe illness last winter which almost caused my death the doctor said Postum Food Coffee was the only thing that I could drink and he just made me quit coffee and drink Postum. My illness was caused by indigestion from the use of tea and coffee.

"The state of my stomach was so bad that it became terribly inflamed and finally resulted in a rupture. I had not drank Postum very long before my lost blood was restored and my stomach was well and strong and I have now been using Postum for almost a year. When I got up from bed after my illness I weighed 98 pounds and now my weight is 120.

"There is no doubt that Postum was the reason for this wonderful improvement and I shall never go back to tea or coffee but shall always stick to the food drink that brought me back to health and strength." Name given by Postum Co., Battle Creek, Mich.

Look in each package for a copy of the famous little book, "The Road to Wellville."

* * *

A GHOSTLY CLIENT.

When a noted criminal lawyer condescends to "talk shop" all present give an undivided attention, feeling sure that he will have something to say worth hearing when he departs from the tradition of silence which his profession demands. The speaker on this occasion was the prosecuting attorney in the well-known case of the Sturgis murder, which was one of the sensations of Lee county some years ago, when Warren Sturgis was on trial in Dixon for the murder of his uncle, old Solomon Sturgis. When the jury were about to render a verdict of guilty the whole affair was closed and Warren Sturgis went free. All sorts of stories were told. Some declared he was let off on a technicality; others that no murder had been committed, and old Solomon was alive and well, but to avoid the publicity it gave them the family went away and nothing definite was known of their whereabouts. So the prosecuting lawyer at last unsealed his lips and told to a chosen few his knowledge of the sudden ending of that famous case.

"I had been making my closing speech to the jury, addressing each man in turn, asking them to weigh the evidence well, and taking into consideration all the attendant circumstances, which I briefly reviewed, and when I finished speaking I felt that my words had already convicted the prisoner and the verdict would without doubt be murder in the first degree, and though I believed the young fellow guilty, his whole past record came up to plead for him and for once I was sorry to see the ends of justice served.

"Fatigued in body and mind, I left the court house and went to a restaurant for a cup of coffee, which I swallowed mechanically, and then stepped out on the street, where it was nearly dark in the early winter afternoon, but light enough for me to see a tall woman in black advancing toward me.

" 'You are Lawyer B.,' she said, hesitatingly. 'I have something to say to you.'

" 'My good woman,' I said, fretfully, 'I cannot be stopped on the street to attend to business. If you wish to see me you can do so at my private office tomorrow or at my rooms in the court house.'

" 'I must see you tonight,' she replied. Her voice was low and she seemed to suffer from fatigue as she spoke. 'Can you not give me a moment at your house—I will not detain you long.'

" 'Not a moment. I need rest and must not be disturbed. Good night, madam,' and I pushed on rather rudely, for I was annoyed.

"After my bachelor dinner that night I threw myself on the lounge in my private office to get a snatch of much-needed sleep before the summons should reach me of the jury's decision on the verdict, and in a few moments was dreaming. It seemed that a bird was flying about me; that it disturbed me until I caught it and put it out of a window; that it then began tapping on the panes in a regular succession of raps which sounded now near, now far; it annoyed me enough to waken me, and there were the raps sounding on the window, the doors, and all around me. I jumped to my feet with a distinct sensation of fear, expecting to see my dream-bird flying toward me. A hesitating knock on the panels of the street door gave me a sense of relief. That was something tangible, not the fragments of a dream. Opening the door I faced the woman who had accosted me on the street.

" 'Really, madam, this is outrageous——' She held up her hand to invoke silence.

" 'Hush! I come to see you on a matter of life and death. You must hear me,' and she quietly entered the room before I could close the door.

"It instantly occurred to me that this woman had come to me with some knowledge of the murder of old Solomon Sturgis, and I asked her to be seated, while I prepared to listen to a long screed that might or might not have some value. But she refused my offer of a seat with a wave of her hand and began speaking in a low but not unmusical voice:

" 'I must hurry—I have only a short time to come here and tell you that Warren Sturgis is not a murderer—is innocent of the death of his uncle, Solomon Sturgis.'

" 'Your proofs, madam; proof is what we need, not assertions of his innocence unsupported by actual proof.'

" 'You shall have ample proof,' she said, speaking slowly and with great deliberation, 'you have only to visit the home of his brother Clifford and order him to produce his brother Solomon, and you will have all the proof you need.'

" 'What do you mean?'

" 'That Solomon Sturgis is not dead, but held a prisoner in the house of his brother.'

" 'Then who was the dead man?'

" 'That I do not know, but I have no time to tell more. What I say is true. Open the door and let me pass.'

"Her voice was so faint it became a mere breath. I said, as obeying her whispered but imperative command:

" 'If this story is true it is of the greatest importance. Where can you be seen again ——who are you?'

"She had been pressing backward to the door and looked miserably ill and weak. Her answer to my words seemed to come from another part of the room, it was remote and indistinct.

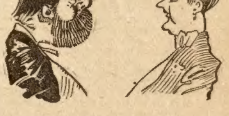
" 'I am the mother of Warren Sturgis, the boy you are trying to hang.'

"Then it was as if some one had struck me a violent blow. Lights flashed before my eyes; there was the surging of water in my ears; the door had not opened, yet I was alone with these words beating at my consciousness, 'I am the mother of Warren Sturgis.' And she had been lying in her grave for a dozen years.

"I suppose it was a dream," continued Lawyer B., in a very unconvincing tone; "but one of the dreams that come true. Proceeding very cautiously—I feared ridicule—I at once visited the house of the man indicated, and to my astonishment the dead man was produced alive—and well—the willing victim of a conspiracy to gain a large sum of money, a dead tramp being made accessory to the plot. They declared that they had no intention of letting his legal heir, who was tried for his murder, go to his death, but the lust of money is strong enough to do murder in most cases. It was a close call to need the evidence of a ghost—or a dream."

* * *

It's Cause.



Mrs. Goodun—Why do you have such a passion for drink? Is it caused by heredity?

Tanky Thompson—No'm; by thirst.

* * *

One of Many.

Pennington—Scribbles wrote a play once entitled "A Pot of Coffee."

Inkerton—Was it a success?

Pennington—Yes, in a way. A few raw eggs settled it.

* * *

Kitchen Repartee.

"You evidently think you are a pretty smooth article," said the bacon.

"Well," repoined the lard, "there can be no doubt as to my refinement."

CLEOPATRA'S NECKLACE;

OR,

The Curse of the White Sapphire.

By T. C. HARBAUGH.

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Begun in No. 46, Nov. 14. Subscriptions can begin with that issue, or back copies can be procured from news stands, or our agents, or by mail from office of publication.

CHAPTER XIII.

FROM WOMAN TO WOMAN.

So Mrs. Harcourt wanted to "settle" with me.

I stared at the woman when she expressed this intention to the lackey who brought a well-filled purse into the room and placed it in her hands.

"But, Mrs. Harcourt," I interposed, as she undid the clasps of the ornate receptacle, "I assure you that you are not my debtor at all."

She paid no attention to my words, but took a roll of bills from the purse and began to count them.

In another moment she had spread one hundred dollars on the table, and then pushed them toward me.

"I make it a rule to take nothing without giving a return," she said.

"But——"

"Please do not interrupt me. You have brought me some pleasing information——"

"Concerning your sister?"

She nodded.

"Then her death is welcome to you?"

"Welcome!" She seemed to speak the word with undisguised joy. "That woman has been the curse of my life. She has weighted me down like a millstone. I don't care where they've buried her, but I hope she is deep enough."

How I despised and hated the haughty creature before me! No matter what had come between the lives of these two women, they were sisters, the one living in regal splendor, the other lying in an unknown grave in the corner of a potter's field.

I indignantly pushed the money from me and looking down at Mrs. Harcourt, I said, with severity:

"Not a dollar of your money, madam! A sister, no matter what her shortcomings be, is to be loved under all circumstances. You can give your money to some charity, as I understand that you are inclined that way."

In another moment she stood before me, her eyes flashing the rage of her inner nature, her voice a quiver, and her hands clenched as though they had shut on my throat.

"Well!" she cried, "you are the only one of your kind I have ever seen who could not be bought. I thought you were all alike. I have paid others of your ilk, but you seem to hold yourself above your brethren. What make of man are you, Mr. Tellfair?"

"I try to be honest, and am devoted to my calling."

"I did not ask you to my house."

"I often go where I am not asked nor wanted."

She shrugged her massive shoulders haughtily and moved half-way across the room.

"Francis! Francis!" she called, in a shrill voice.

The door opened and the tall lackey came in.

"Put that intruder out, please!" commanded Mrs. Harcourt.

Her finger covered me, but the lackey did not move. I looked him over and knew that I was his master in physical strength, and I really hoped he would attempt to carry out the commands of his mistress which would give me an opportunity to throw him across the room.

"Why don't you obey me?" cried the infuriated woman, stamping one foot on the carpet. "Throw him bodily out of the house this very minute."

Francis shut his lips hard and came toward me, but not seeking an altercation, I moved past him and reached the door.

"If you dare, sir," my eyes said to him; but the man seemed willing to let me go in peace. At the portal I paused and looked squarely at Veronica Harcourt; she was now purple with rage—rage which she did not try to beat down; it seemed to be consuming her heart like a raging fire, and in all my career I had never stood face to face with just such a creature.

"Good-by, madam," I said. "I shall pursue my investigations into the death of Mary Marlowe, and the theft of Cleopatra's necklace. I shall leave no stone unturned to accomplish my purpose and woe to the person or persons caught in my dragnet!"

She did not give me answer; she was too enraged for that, and leaving her with her passions and the lackey, I opened the door and slipped into the hall.

I heard the voice of the woman I had left behind in loud commands to Francis, but the door did not open, and in another minute I was again on the street.

Little did I dream while I faced the millionairess that in the shadows outside a person was waiting for me.

I had but left the mansion a moment when footsteps behind me caused me to turn and a figure rose before me in the lamplight that sent my blood swiftly through my veins.

Ruth Jansen!

The big nurse came forward with something like a smile on her face, and the moment she halted before me she exclaimed:

"I hope you got away unscathed, Mr. Tellfair?"

"From the claws of the tigress, you mean? Yes; I did not get so much as a scratch, but had I remained a little longer I would not vouch for my safety."

Jansen laughed.

"You've been waiting for me?" I queried.

"Yes."

"Did you see———"

"I saw and heard pretty much all," she interrupted. "I had my face at the window, and thanks to a displaced slat in the shutter, I witnessed the little drama. You did not catch Mrs. Harcourt in her best mood tonight."

"Has she a 'best mood?' "

"At long intervals." Jansen showed her white teeth as she answered.

"I hear that she is utterly heartless," said I. "She was glad to hear that her sister is dead, and wanted to pay me for bringing her the information."

"Her sister? You don't mean——"

"Old Mag."

Ruth Jansen drew back a pace and then came toward me with a sharp little cry.

"I—I did not know that," she said. "Did you ever test her wonderful powers?"

"Yes; she summoned the dead back upon her mystic curtain and then the living."

"What dead?"

Before I answered the tall nurse I took her arm and led her away. Fortunately for my purpose, there was a quiet restaurant not far away, and in a little while we were seated in one corner of the place.

"What dead? you asked," I resumed, going back to her question on the street. "Why, the departed owners of the white sapphire, Thermuthis, Cleopatra, Saul, the Medicis, the Borgias, and Marie Antoinette."

"She called them all up for me once," exclaimed Jansen. "I was horrified. That witch knew much about those people and yet the strangest thing of all is that she was Veronica Harcourt's sister."

"Do you know, Miss Jansen, that I have discovered who stole the sapphire that night?"

I caught the pallor that swept over the face across the table and the glass of wine which Ruth Jansen was raising to her lips tottered and spilled some of its crimson contents on the white cloth.

"Then you have discovered—who?" she gasped.

"The man who stole the necklace and who probably murdered Mrs. Marlowe."

"The—man?"

"Why not? When a man sells one of the Egyptian pearls and then slips away to Europe, isn't he the right person to follow?"

"Certainly, if you think so," and the glass was replaced on the table and the Jansen looked away.

"Why don't you congratulate me upon my skill?" said I.

"Excuse me, Mr. Tellfair. I have overstayed my time here. So the man has sailed for Europe? Ha, ha, ha!" and with the derisive laugh ringing around her, Ruth Jansen slipped away.

CHAPTER XIV.

IN HELL'S HALF-ACRE.

I would have followed the nurse but for the look she gave me as she turned to glide from the room.

Evidently she had not said to me what she intended to say after I emerged from the Harcourt home, but circumstances had changed her mind, and I had nothing but her astonishment to recall and a half finished lunch on her plate.

Her meeting with Sydney Marlowe, the disowned, in the Marlowe mansion had not been forgotten. I remembered how she had faced him with a raised dagger almost accusing him of the murder and theft, but when I had told her for a purpose that I had discovered the man who had committed the double crime she nearly spilled her wine and laughed in my face.

Half an hour later I entered my little lodgings and found a sealed note on my table.

Notes delivered during my absence were always left on the table for me, and in a little while I had broken the seal.

The writing was a scrawl, and the writer had used a bad pencil, writing on a rough surface, but I had become used to poor chirography, so that the message did not remain an enigma very long.

What I read ran as follows:

"Come to number twenty-five C—— street as soon as you get this. I am in trouble again. Jerry P."

I looked up from the paper and laughed.

"Doubtless, the old chap is in trouble, for there's no reformation in him so long as there's a pocket to pick or a house to break into. But I'll go."

The writer of the note was an old offender—a man who had seen the inside of more than one prison. On one occasion he had helped me to clear up a mysterious crime and I had promised him to come to him at any hour when he wanted me and to help him out of the toils should he fall into them again, which event I knew to be but a question of time.

C—— street was not in the most aristocratic quarter of the city; in fact, that portion of it designated in the crook's letter was the abode of law-breakers of nearly every sort, men who were Ishmaelites in every sense of the term, murderers, coniakers, thieves of every description, down to the lowest pickpocket in existence.

Fifteen minutes later, by taking a short cut, I reached my destination and was knocking at a dirty door in a dirty neighborhood inhabited by dirty people.

The night was fairly well advanced and I had dropped down into Hell's Half-Acre unperceived.

The door was opened a trifle and a bleared face looked out upon me, taking my measure from head to foot in the uncertain light that prevailed.

"I came to see Jerry," said I.

In another moment I was ushered into a narrow hall and was pushed forward by a hand whose skeleton fingers measured themselves on my back. The odors by which I was surrounded were nearly stifling and the heat in the place did not help them any.

At the end of the stygian passageway a door was pulled open and I stumbled across a threshold.

For a moment I seemed to be blinded by a strange light, but when I became accustomed to it I saw a little man lying on a pallet like one dead.

"It was my "friend" Jerry, the Crackster.

The lamp which stood on a table I picked up and approached the couch.

A pair of beady eyes regarded me with insane light and at last a faint smile of recognition crossed the tawny features on the dirty pillows.

"I've got it," said Jerry, in low tones.

"You've got what, old boy?"

"What we all get in the end," and he tried to take my hand and press it against his side.

I understood him at once. He was injured, perhaps shot by some one whom he had been trying to rob. At any rate, I knew that the seal of death was on the old crook's face.

"You understand, Mr. Tellfair?" he went on, speaking slowly. "I got it in here—not a bullet, but a blade."

"When?"

"Last night. You see, I thought I would, but I couldn't. You never took much stock in my promises anyhow, I guess. It was born in old Jerry. My father was a crook before me, and my mother—well, she wasn't a saint, neither am I. But that's not why I sent for you."

"Go on, then."

"Gee! How that pain goes through me when I twist a little. It was a sharp blade, I tell you. She had me at a disadvantage and then she was a regular giantess, could have held me at arms' length, and cut me to pieces."

"Oh, a woman cut you?"

"No; a hell cat! She's no woman, though she goes in stunning society and gets her name in the papers as one o' the elect. You see, I thought there'd be some good loot in her house, and there ought to be, for she has diamonds galore. Wot would I have done with them, anyhow, if I had cabbaged the whole lot? Gee! that house is like a a palace, though I own that I've never seen many palaces, 'cause I never crossed the pond."

"What loot did you get?"

"I got the blade," he grinned.

"Was that all?"

"God! man! Wasn't that too much? I got home the best I could and here I've been lyin' ever since with my side on fire and the p'int o' that knife somewhere inside o' me. I was in her private room and in another moment I would have opened the treasure box when somethin' caught me like a flyin' vise an' I was held in midair by one big jeweled hand, and she was lookin' at me as a cat looks at the mouse in her paws."

"Who was she, Jerry?"

"I'm a comin' to that d'rectly," said the crook. "Give me time."

"All you want, but you must tell it briefly."

"I feel that, too. Well, she held me there a minute and then she reached for a silver-handled knife with a blade that made me shudder an' the way she held it before me face sent all manner of cold chills down my spine. She laughed till her great face was red—God! what a big face she had, with big diamond earrings in her ears—and then she would shake the knife in my face and look for a good place for it in my anatomy. When she found it she scraped the p'int o' the knife along my skin to give me a foretaste o' what was comin' an' all at once she drove the blade home."

"And then?"

"Why, she twisted the knife in the wound and held me off and looked at me and grinned. Then she dragged me through the room an' down stairs, clear through that palace o' hers. I knowed all the time I was up against it for the last time, an' I summoned all my strength to give the coroner a job in that big house. She unlocked a door on the lower floor an' raised me in her arms for a fling. As I came up on a level with her breast, I caught sight of a necklace that glittered there, and threw my hand at it. In another moment I had it in my grip, but she didn't know it. Suddenly I was launched out into space and I heard a cry from her throat and that's all I knew till I found myself in an alley back o' that house. But I had had my revenge. I had torn her necklace in two an' one o' the jewels remained in my hand. Reach under

The BOY who won over the GRAND TRUNK RAILWAY

RALPH F. WOOD sells *The Saturday Evening Post* in Quebec. He recently visited the general offices of the Grand Trunk Railway. On the first floor he was hailed by a watchman who said that newsboys were not allowed in the building. "I am not a newsboy," Ralph replied, stepping confidently upon the elevator. "I am delivering some magazines to customers up-stairs, and they will be as mad as wet hens if they don't get them right off." ¶ In the freight department a gentleman told him that boys had no business there. "I don't think people talk that way to you, when you are in their offices on business," said Ralph. "That's different," said the gentleman. "I don't see that it is," answered Ralph. "I represent a big publishing company, and I guess it would be worth five cents to anybody in this office to see what the president of a big American railroad says right in this number about railroading." This interested the gentleman and he handed out five cents, telling Ralph that he could also "bring it around next week." Then he gave the lad permission to go to the desk of each employee in the department. In this way Ralph secured 25 customers. ¶ In other buildings he secured 100 customers. The next month he sold 450 copies, winning a generous, special cash prize. Ralph, who is only 12 years old, writes:

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the pillow, Mr. Tellfair. It's there wrapped up in a rag. It's a daisy, but I wouldn't dare handle it: it's too big for me."

The old crook laughed as I pulled the jewel from its hiding place.

As I unwrapped it I gave vent to a cry I couldn't keep back, for it was a huge pearl, the counterpart of the one Sydney Marlowe had sold to Preston & Preston, jewelers.

"What was her name?" I demanded, turning to old Jerry.

There was no reply; the crook was beyond the power of speech.

CHAPTER XV.

EARL STEFFACE'S STORY.

A few days after the event just related a letter from the old world was placed in my hands.

It bore the postmark of Paris, and, guessing its authorship, I opened it with a great deal of curiosity. It proved to be from Cyrille and she wrote me that they had reached Paris where they were stopping at a fashionable hotel. She was quite well and had stood the journey much better than she expected, but her foster father had treated her with a good deal of coldness, but this was his nature.

There was much in Cyrille's letter that was hinted at more than openly mentioned, and I could easily read between the lines. No reference was made to the two mysteries of Marble House, though some of the sentences seemed to break off abruptly, as if she was approaching some reference to the events which must still be uppermost in her mind.

She wrote that they might not remain long in the French capital, but their future destination was unknown to her, and I laid the letter aside after reading it twice.

The pearl which had reached me through Jerry the Crackster, I carried to Preston, who averred that it really belonged to Cleopatra's necklace, and, by comparing it with the duplicate, he convinced me of the truth of his assertion.

The dagger wound received by the crook had not yet proved fatal from what I learned by another visit to Hell's Half-Acre. The old man had mysteriously vanished in the night, quitting his filthy abode, and none of his friends could trace him for me. I was, therefore, left somewhat in the dark concerning the holder of the necklace; but I determined to make a search for that person.

"Just a moment," said a voice at my elbow, as I was about to turn a busy corner of the city.

"Well, sir, what is it?"

I was looking into the face of Earl Stefface, and, remembering my last meeting with him, I drew off a little and waited for him to go on.

"Are you busy?" he asked.

There was a cold look in the man's eye and his lips came hard together as he spoke.

"Not if you have any particular business with me," said I, and followed him into a cafe.

"I appreciate your eagerness to get at the end of this double mystery," he went on, when we had seated ourselves in a quiet corner where we were not likely to be overheard. "I think I can help you."

"I never refuse assistance when it is offered in the right spirit."

Stefface avoided my gaze and looked down at his wine.

"You are aware, of course, that Sydney Marlowe has turned up?"

I bowed.

"He came back like a curse," he went on. "He came back with evil in his heart, the guilty wretch. Do you know that he was in Marble House the night of the seventeenth?"

I remembered what I had heard Ruth Jansen say in the son's presence when she confronted him with the dagger.

"Was he really back that night?" I asked.

"He was; I was there, also. Now," and Stefface smiled, "I happened to run across him in a peculiar situation. Mrs. Marlowe, as you may also know, was slightly indisposed; she was under the care of a nurse."

"One Ruth Jansen."

"I see you know that. Well, I was in the house that night, as I have just told you, and I caught sight of this disreputable son in hiding like an assassin. At first I was on the point of raising an alarm, believing that the figure I saw near Mrs. Marlowe's room was a night prowler bent on mischief, when he shifted his position, and I recognized the man. While I looked he glided down the hall and to my surprise opened the door leading into his mother's room and vanished."

"Where was Nurse Jansen at the time?"

"Not there, surely. I was so astonished at what I had seen that I seemed benumbed. That this wretch should come back to the house from which he had been justly banished——"

I reached across the small table and laid my hand on Earl Stefface's arm.

"One moment, sir. Do you know why he was disowned?"

"Don't you?"

"I have never inquired."

"Then let me enlighten you. This young man, without the least respect for his parents' wishes, without respect for the station they ccupied in the social world, made love to one beneath him, to a girl without ancestry, a creature in whose blood ran a black strain———"

"You are sure of this?"

"Perfectly sure."

"You got it from the father, I suppose?"

Stefface winced a little.

"I got it straight," he said, with emphasis. "Well, he persisted in his love-making until his father, unwilling to put up with the disgrace, cut him off as he should and sent him adrift, forbidding him ever to set his foot again in Marble House. But that is not exactly to my story."

"Go back to it, then."

"I waited in my niche for a while, and presently the door of Mrs. Marlowe's room opened and he came out. The look in his eyes was simply diabolical. In his hand he carried something that seemed to hang beneath it, and as he flitted through a rift of light in the hall I saw that something glitter like a string of jewels."

I had lost not a word of this narration. Earl Stefface was as cool as though he were relating a commonplace matter and not tightening the hangman's noose about the neck of a fellow man.

"As I watched him move toward the back staircase—you probably know where that is—he thrust what he carried into his pocket and in a few moments vanished. Then I went downstairs and met St. John Marlowe. We did not converse very long, and for reasons best known to myself at the time, I made no mention of what I had seen for fear of throwing the father into ungovernable rage. I soon afterward quitted the house and did not hear of the tragedy until hours afterward."

As Stefface finished he picked up the cigar he had laid down and complacently relighted it.

"I thought you might like to know of these events," he resumed a moment later. "Indeed, Mr. Tellfair, I deemed it my duty to keep silence no longer, but to give you my story as briefly and succinctly as possible."

I remained silent for a moment, when I looked the man squarely in the face, and said:

"Would you be kind enough, Mr. Stefface, to explain your presence on the second floor at that particular time?"

"Certainly. I went up to see Mrs. Marlowe."

"Ah!"

"Afterward I feared that her son's visit might have unnerved her, so I changed my mind and went down without seeing her."

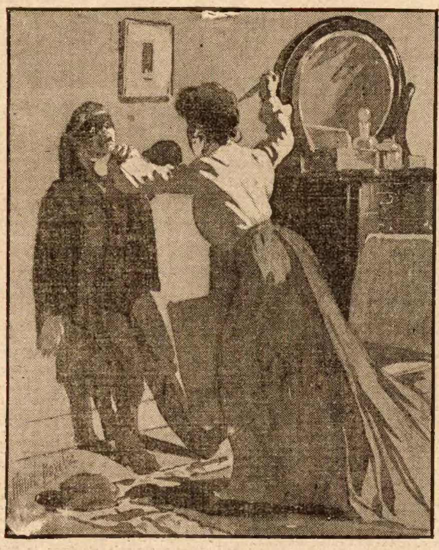
"A very improbable explanation in my opinion."

Instead of flushing and leaping to his feet with a curse he merely looked across the table and kept his temper.

"Knowing of you as I do," I resumed, "an event like the one you have described would not have kept you from Mrs. Marlowe's chamber."

"And why not?"

"I am not here to explain everything I have thus far deduced from certain events connected with the double mystery."



She drove the blade home.

"But you do not think that Sydney Marlowe did not see his mother that night?"

"I do not."

"Don't you believe that when he came out of that room he carried the Cleopatrian jewels, including the white sapphire?"

"Time will tell," said I. "I am vouching no professional opinion just now," and turning down my glass, I arose and left the table.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE MYSTERY DEEPENS.

The double mystery of Marble House was becoming perplexing and all the time getting deeper.

If Earl Stefface had seen Sydney Marlowe come out of his mother's room the night of the murder and theft with jewels in his hands, were they not the gems of the famous necklace? For it was known that Mrs. Marlowe kept the treasure in her apartments and who would be more likely to know where it was hidden than the dishonored son?

Then the story told by Jerry the Crackster weighed with me not a little. He had come away from a certain house, if his story was true, with one of the genuine gems that belonged to the necklace. He had not robbed a man, but a woman—a giantess in frame, and a woman of prodigious strength. I knew of but one such woman, that is, I could think of but one connected in any way with the name of Marlowe, and that was Mrs. Harcourt.

Had Jerry tried to rob her and had he snatched from her bosom the gem which drew from me an exclamation of surprise and caused me to pause for awhile in my mystery hunt, wondering what the next surprise would be? Young Marlowe was on the broad ocean; he had put miles of water between us, and when I recalled his harsh words concerning Cyrille, knowing how he hated her, I dreaded to hear of his arrival in Paris.

I could not doubt that Sydney Marlowe was at home the night of the crime. Stefface had seen him, so had Ruth Jansen, and in fact, I remembered that he had not denied his coming home that night to the tall nurse.

For once in my life at least I stood in mental darkness, for I found no gleam of victory, surrounded as I was by the perplexing evidence which during the last few days had been thrust upon me.

After all, it might turn out that the person responsible for Mrs. Marlowe's death was not guilty of the theft of the famous necklace with its accursed sapphire.

I must own that I thought more of Cyrille than of the case in hand. A brief sentence in her last letter led me to believe that she was not only unhappy but in peril—that she feared for the future, as if a pall of fate hung over her ready to blight her young life. Then, the declaration by Earl Stefface that he intended to wed Cyrille told me that another diabolical scheme was afoot, one which had the sanction of St. John Marlowe himself, and for a moment I thought of abandoning the trali in this country and taking the first steamer for Europe.

Ruth Jansen, I was confident, knew more than she had ever told.

Her shrill laugh of derision when I told her for effect that I had located the man who had stolen the white sapphire came back to me with great force.

Would she treat my words with contempt, to say nothing of derision?

Therefore, after going over the whole dark problem as best I could, I resolved to see the nurse again and force from her the truth, or something that would lead me to a sure clew. I knew that I would meet a cool-headed woman, one who never lost her nerve. Her cold tones when she came down the stairs and said to St. John Marlowe, "Your wife is dead," had never left me.

The night after my interview with Earl Stefface I walked up the steps of the house occupied by Ruth Jansen and rang the bell. Perhaps if she had seen me I would not be accorded an audience with her, but I hoped for the best.

To my surprise the Jansen opened the door herself and bowed me smilingly into the hall. It was more than I expected.

In the parlor she turned to me and in a voice quite unlike her own, for she had dropped that formal tone so peculiar to it, she said quietly:

"You gave me quite a shock in the cafe, Mr. Tellfair. I was rude to laugh in your face. It was an incredulous laugh, too; but, really, I could not keep it back."

"You refer to my statement that I had located the man who stole the white sapphire?"

"Yes."

"Was there anything strange about the statement, Miss? You must not forget that I am a detective by profession."

"That is something not easily forgotten," she went on.

"Yet you laughed at my words."

"It was the only thing I could do."

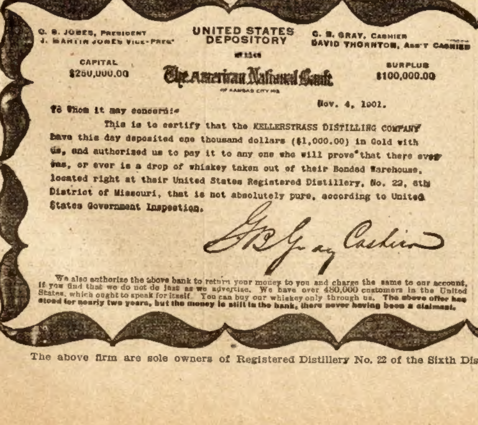
"Will you please explain?"

That moment a refusal came into her looks and the face grew cold and hard again. Ruth Jansen looked toward the window and slowly let her gaze come back to me.

"I thought you liked to solve these problems of crime without assistance?" said she.

"I see you have reason for not explaining the derisive laugh with which you met my statement at the cafe."

(Continued on page fourteen.)



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Don't take chances of proposing to a girl on Friday; she might not refuse you.

A woman usually begins her life work when she marries a man to reform him.

Some men are like pins; they have their good points, yet they are apt to stick you.

A diplomat is a man who pretends that the other fellow's way is his when he can't have his own.

On the whole, it is lucky for Cuba that there is a presidential campaign impending in this country.

Panama may want to come into the Union some day, but first it would like to get hold of that $10,000,000.

It's the toughest kind of tough luck to have your watch stolen when you are on your way to pawn it.

The new Republic of Panama is nearly as large as the State of Indiana. It hasn't half as many poets, though.

Professional beggars are working toward St. Louis with a view to getting a part of what the hotel men do not take next year.

Manifest Destiny may have freed Panama, but the American residents of the isthmus are sure to be accused of having put her up to it.

Those New Yorkers who want to sell an ear may desire to go through life giving the impression that they are football heroes.

If Mr. Rockefeller has secured control of the Steel Trust, how would it do for him to let the rest of the water out and fill it up with oil?

A Denver man eloped the other day with the hired girl. It was a mean trick to play on his wife, with girls as scarce as they are at present.

Aguinaldo in reading the account of affairs in Panama may well wonder whether in civilized lands sauce for the goose is also sauce for the gander.

It is a wonder that no great financier has thought of the possibility of organizing the eligible noblemen of Europe into a trust and forcing American heiresses to get their coronets at monopoly prices.

Henceforth the Kaiser will have to do only a moderate amount of speechmaking, since the rough edges of German words hurt his throat. He might try the experiment of talking in some ball-bearing language like French or Italian.

THE MARK OF CAIN; or, The Black Pride of the Countess of Barnchester.

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CHAPTER XV.

"Love is a god, strong, free, unbounded;
Fears nothing, pitieth none."

Worn, footsore and wet, King entered his home after walking from the gambling house, and started to go upstairs, but as he passed the library he heard Queenie's voice, and stopped.

"Poor King! why are you all wet?" she said gently, advancing and laying her hand upon his sleeve.

"Never mind," he said ungraciously; "I'm not made of sugar."

"No, I would not say so by the way you answer me. Why, King, it is the first time you have ever been rude to me. To atone you must come in and let me pet you up a little," and so saying she stepped aside to display a glowing wood fire and a hissing urn.

The bright, warm room, the gentle-voiced woman with her half-merry, half-tender words, seemed to descend like a soothing balm upon his torn heart, and with a sigh of relief he entered.

"First, give me your hat. Dear, me! you extravagant wretch! A new crush added to the derelicts you have in this line. Off with your coat. See what an excellent valet I make! Give me a good character if I apply for a position, won't you? See, there are warm slippers and a bootjack. Make yourself comfortable while I see about this coffee, for I want a cup myself. Yes, put on the smoking-jacket—why need we use ceremony with each other?" And so chattering in her soft, cool voice, Queenie busied herself, without any show of haste, for she was never in a hurry, and by the time King was seated in an easy chair conveniently drawn up to the fire, she had his coffee and a couple of dainty sandwiches ready for him. When his wants were attended to she took a cup herself and, perched upon a low stool by his side, amused him with some merry talk about mutual friends until he had swallowed several cups of coffee and eaten a sandwich.

Suddenly the low voice ceased, and he raised his head. Queenie had put away her cup and was sitting in a chair opposite, whose dark leather threw out her tiny figure in an astonishing degree. Her golden head, with its carefully arranged hair, lay back against the soft cushions, with a helplessness he had never noticed before. She had grown thinner. In fact, the little figure looked like that of a tired child. How soft and babyish she seemed, one who must be protected from every harm!

As though she could feel his eyes through her closed lids, Queenie started, then said hastily:

"Forgive me, King, but I was tired."

"Tired! I should think you would be. Why," looking at his watch, "it's 3 o'clock! Come, dear, you must go to bed. We will have you sick next," and, rising, he bent over the little thing to lift her up, when to his surprise she laid her face against his arm and began to cry. Not as he had seen women cry, but like a creature who saw no hope in this world or the next. Her hands clasped one of his, and seemed to entreat him to wait until she could regain her voice. For a minute King waited, and then his heart going out in sympathy, he lifted the shaking form on his knee and held her close to his breast and, patting her shoulder, tried with brotherly affection to soothe and comfort one who had always been very dear to him.

At last Queenie drew herself away from his arms, but he held her on his knee and looked down tenderly into the small, wan face.

"Queenie, dear, you must tell me what is the matter."

"It will do no good. Let me go, King."

"Not until you confide in me, dear. You know my troubles—be equally frank with me."

"I cannot."

"Does my little sister love some one?" he whispered gently, and before the words were out of his mouth he could feel her tremble.

"Poor child!" he said, without waiting for an answer.. "It's the same old, miserable story. Don't let it hurt you so, Queenie. No man is worth your worrying out your life about."

"I cannot help it, although I have fought so against it. I love him—I love him so!" she cried, her hands before her face, and, slipping from his knee, she fell upon the floor, her golden hair falling about her like a cloud.

"Is he brute enough not to love you, dear?" King cried in astonishment, bending down and trying to raise her, but she clung to his chair and sobbed until it seemed as though her little frame would not withstand the attack.

"He does not love me," she whispered through her sobs.

"Queenie, dear, you surely would not give your heart unasked?" he said in astonishment, remembering her dignity and queenly bearing, and the many fine offers of marriage she had received.

The girl half rose, brushing back her hair from her face, and said quietly, although the sobs still wrenched her sadly:

"King, there are some who take love from us without our volition. A woman does not always wait until a man says come, before she probes her own heart."

"How long have you known this, dear?" he asked tenderly, his own sympathies thoroughly aroused.

"Known what?" she asked absently.

"That you have loved him?"

"All my life, nearly," she returned, looking into the fire.

King fairly gasped. "Queenie, don't say it is I—don't, for God's sake, don't!"

"Don't say what? Oh, King., King, how could I have betrayed myself so!" and the golden head was again bowed in the very dust, but a strong pair of arms raised her, raised her to the height of his heart. "Listen, Queenie, stop sobbing. Forget for the moment that it is any one but your brother talking to you. Have I won your heart, dear little girl? Now tell me, you need not be afraid," and he forced her to look into his eyes.

"Yes."

"I have taken from the poor child her most precious possession, and then caused her such agony. Why, Queenie, I would rather have cut off my right arm than made you suffer this way. Then, good Lord! I intruded my own affairs upon you."

"Never mind, King. It was just because I could not bear to have you hurt that I felt so."

Suddenly Litchfield's advice of that very night came back to him. Here was a dear, sweet, good woman, who knew everything, and to whom he owed much for her suffering. His own life was blasted, but if in spite of his sorrow he could bring a little happiness into hers, for he knew her nature well enough to know that, loving him, she could never bestow herself upon another, would he not be doing his duty? All this went through his brain like lightning before se said, softly:

"Come, Queenie, sit down in this chair; there, are you comfortable? I want to say something to you."

The little face was buried on the arm of the chair, but he raised it.

"Through my selfishness, you know what has been in the past—that is, some of it. This winter I have tried to forget, but, Queenie, a bad woman cannot wipe out the memory of a wrong any more than can cards or wine. The only thing which can make me forget is——"

He paused, and she, raising herself and putting her hands on his shoulders as he was half kneeling beside her chair, cried:

"Is what, King?"

"Your love," then caught her in his arms and kissed her gently.

For a moment she lay there perfectly happy. Happier than she was destined to be again, when suddenly came the memory of the kisses she had witnessed, and she drew herself away.

"But, King, you do not love me."

"Not as I can love, and I mean to love you, darling, if you will be patient with me. My heart is very sore and bitter. Your dear, womanly sympathy can heal it and make me a very happy man, so I honestly believe. But you, dear? Are you strong enough? Are you willing to give me all your dear love, and take so little in return? Tell me, dear. I will do all in my power—you know I will, but our love is a thing which cannot be forced or driven. Think, dear, think. I promise you my lifelong fidelity, my deepest respect, and a love which began when the little golden-haired girl came into my play-room. It will be my constant endeavor to love you beyond anything else in all this wide world, but I cannot promise you I will succeed."

"Then you still love her?" Queenie asked quickly.

"Dearest, we will begin fair and square. Unfortunately, I do, but I shall try with all my heart to banish her image, and I think that I can. As I told you, a bad woman cannot give me a moment's surcease, no matter how fascinating she may be, but a good woman I trust and believe can, and so I ask you, Queenie, humbly and earnestly—will you sacrifice yourself and become my wife?"

The girl stood there a moment, then, as he rose and opened his arms to her, she threw herself into them, crying with an abandon which astonished him:

"Will I, King, will I? Merciful God in Heaven! he asks me that? Yes, yes, a thousand times over, and you could have searched the world over before you found one who would be more devoted to you or who would have done more for you."

When the sun's beams fell that morning through the windows of King's room, they saw him sitting with his hands clasped before him, gazing upon a picture no other eyes could see:

A sweet, oval face, surrounded with dark, fluffy hair, and dark eyes which held the mystery of his world of love and happiness in their depths. Over all hung the maddening clover blooms. Upon the still air he heard his own voice saying:

"Before God and in the presence of the woman who is the dearest being on earth to me, I make this oath of my own free will, to be binding upon me until my death; that unless I am permitted to make her my wife, I will go unmarried until the end of my days, and that I will never say a single word of love to any other woman, so help me God!"

In the same house a fragile girl lay upon her bed, her golden hair falling all about her, whispering, with hands held upward:

"'A good woman.' I am a good woman, I will be one, and if it tears the very heart from my breast, I will be patient, gentle and sweet with him, and finally win his love. What was hers to mine? Would she have dared all I have dared? Just give me the chance, and I will make him oh! so happy." Then with a groan: "How can I—I, with the mark of Cain upon me? God pity me before I wear out my soul with this ceaseless agony. Let me have a few months of happiness, for I have paid oh! so dearly for it. Oh, help! help! help!"

CHAPTER XVI.

"The earmarks of lave are not easily effaced."

A week has passed, and the three young men whose lives are so strangely interwoven, are once more together, smoking in the Earl's apartments.

The young fellow has improved. Many of the provincialisms which have distinguished him from his companions, have been brushed off, and even the "A" is less aggressive. Taking him all in all, his friends find the peer a very agreeable companion, and King and Litchfield have grown wonderfully attached to him.

"A cléan, straight fellow," is Litchfield's encomium, while King thinks of him as:

"Nearly as good as an American in spite of his title."

The three are chatting carelessly, when finally the Earl says, dropping his light tone:

"I say, do you chaps know I think I have lighted upon a slight clew?"

Both his companions looked interested.

"Yes; I have found a trace of a William Stirling, but I do not think he can be the man my mother married."

"Indeed, why not?" King asked, absently, for in spite of himself, his thoughts were straying back to Clover, although to do him credit, he was endeavoring very hard to turn his love toward Queenie.

"Well, he was a rather low sort of a chap, but still it might have been some of the same family. If I could get anything out of her. I say, Litchfield, you promised to call upon her," turning to that gentleman, who had risen and was looking out of the window.

"I have," was the quiet response, "several times."

"Of all things," the Earl said, hastily, his face flushing. For a moment a wild fear rose in his heart. His mother was still a remarkably beautiful woman, and although many years Litchfield's senior, stranger things had happened, and then the man had something very attractive about him, something so distinctively commanding and prepossessing. Then his better sense gained the mastery.

"What I meant to say is, that I am awfully sorry, you know, that I was out. Come again, as many times as you will. Indeed, I think she might receive you now; I will go and see," and he arose.

"Do not disturb her, Barnchester, my boy," Litchfield said, quietly, crossing the room, and laying a hand upon the young fellow's shoulder. "Forgive me, but I do not think your mother is very strong. Why pursue your idea? There must have been some good cause for her action. Suppose I make you a promise. If you will abandon all search which will in any way annoy her, I will promise to get all the information she has for you within the next month."

Geoffrey, Earl of Barnchester, raised his head and looked into the steady eyes of the other, his dark ones flashing, but there was something so quiet and reassuring in the manly face that the fire died out, and he laid his slim, aristocratic hand in that of the older man. Suddenly he cried:

"Litchfield, look," and he held his hand beside the larger, stronger one of his friend. The hands were beautiful, long, slim, with tapering fingers, yet with a latent strength suggested in the outline as well as in the fine, firm flesh. Although Litchefild's hand was built on much larger proportions, and showed the traces of manual labor, it was but the same in every detail.

"I say, King," for that gentleman had moved away and was standing by the fireplace looking at some views of Hongkong which the young nobleman had gathered on his visit to that city, "come here; I want you to look."

"My dear boy, such a trifle is scarcely worth noticing. We happen to have similar temperaments; oh, yes, we do. I am nearly ten years your senior, you know. When I was your age I was as much like you as a boy brought up in a country village could resemble the heir of a long line of aristocratic ancestors."

"Damn the ancestors; they all had hands that looked like the deuce, to judge by their portraits. My hands come from my mother, if you have noticed."

A dull flush mounted Litchfield's face, as he replied, gravely:

"The Countess of Barnchester is one of the most charming ladies I have had the pleasure of meeting," and again the son's fears were aroused, but King fancied that there was some reason why their mutual friend appeared to avoid the mention of her name, and that also he did not permit any comparison of the two hands. Suddenly there flashed into his mind the statement Litchfield had made the first night they had met, when he had asked him if a

Litchfield, then quite prominent in politics, were any relative of his, and he had replied, sadly:

"No; except my sister, I have no one in all this world to call my own."

This thought led to another, and he asked, suddenly:

"I say, Litchfield, I think you mentioned your sister. My mother told me to say to you that she would be very glad to bring my—my, her ward to call upon the young lady, if you would so desire."

Litchfield looked up, his usual composed expression concealing his real thoughts, and replied, courteously:

"Mrs. Wadsworth is more than kind, and present my thanks to her, but my sister is in deep mourning of spirit, although I do not permit her to wear anything black, for a dear relative, and in consequence denies herself to every one."

"Do you think that wise?" asked King, quietly.

"No; I confess I do not, but until the poor, wounded heart heals, I do not want to have her worried about anything. Fortunately, she is passionately fond of music, and many otherwise weary hours are spent in study."

"Litchfield here has a magnificent voice," the Earl broke in, going up and throwing an arm boyishly about the other's shoulders, whispering as he did so:

"Beastly sorry, old chap, if I annoyed you."

A peculiar expression came into Litchfield's true eyes, as he smiled pleasantly, answering the boy's apology by clasping his hand warmly, and his praise with the word:

"Nonsense!"

"But he does. Coming home in the China, you know, we all came on the same boat. We had been doing the Orient, and Litchfield was coming home. Stanley was on board, too, so was Miss Tremont, Dillingworth, and a Miss Ainsworth, and that cub, Soughleighton."

Litchfield laughed merrily at the mention of the last name.

"He's on the Grand Tour, you know," he said, imitating the affected tones of the young Viscount to a nicety.

"Ah, yes," the Earl responded, succeeding equally well in his effort.

Litchfield looked up sharply, but continued, a little of the gladness gone from his voice, however:

"He reached Chicago, and somehow the Grand Tour isn't quite such a function out there. The youngster took a suite of rooms at the Auditorium Annex, and sent a notification to the leading paper that the Viscount Sloughleighton, heir to the Earldom of Tadsmyre, was in town and would receive calls from the leading men of the burg from two to four. All gentlemen must be in regulation dress. None admitted without frock coat, silk hat, in fact, the costume prescribed by his majesty, King Edward VII. The full notice was inserted, and below it the editor said: Sorry, Soughy, but we only have three frock coats in the burg and two silk hats; and as we all do not come within their dimensions some of us will have to stay away, but, old boy, don't miss any of the show, but stand at your window and look down at us as we trip by in our bob-tail coats and rain-stained headgear, and perhaps if you will look hard you may see what a real Man looks like for once in your life."

The young Earl looked disgusted, as he cried:

"Do you honestly suppose that pup would have had the impudence?"

"Which pup?" King said, as soon as he could find his voice, for Litchfield had warmed to his task and given a magnificent imitation.

"Why, Southleighton, of course. No wonder Englishmen are misunderstood when such as he are taken for samples. His father bought the title. Made a fortune at soap-making or something like that," and the aristocratic young nose was lifted.

"Beg pardon, though. You see, you can scarcely understand the status of a soapmaker in England. They are low, vulgar men who lose their 'h's' as badly as we enlarge our 'a's.' Oh, yes, I am learning a few things, and sometimes, in spite of the fact that I am a rich man, and heir to my old and honored title, I wish I were an American, free to go and come, and not weighted down with the deeds of the men who have gone before me."

"Good for you, old man," King replied, heartily, "but you are half American, anyway."

"That's my consolation, and there is something else. I intend to marry an American girl. Bless you, I don't know whom, but some one."

Both men laughed long and heartily, for the boy looked a culprit as he stood there before them, flushed, laughing, and yet with a determined expression on his handsome young face.

"Well," King said, slowly, his blue eyes twinkling. "If Mrs. Fast, Mrs. Rufus Fast, were Lillian Tremont again, I can warrant that you would go back with an American bride."

"Oh, Miss Tremont, yes, so she is married, then?" Litchfield asked, remembering the young lady and her many unsuccessful attempts to draw him into a flirtation on board the China.

"The very girl. Of course she's married. Why, the papers were full of it just before Christmas, so that all the sporting news was crowded out, and you know an event is certainly of importance which can oust that part of the news. Yes; her outfit was gathered from every portion of the world. She went from New York to Paris, through all of Europe, down to Africa, and through the Orient to get the most impossible and costly materials and other things girls seem to think necessary in order to get married. The customs office waxed fat on her duties. There were how many bridesmaids, Barnchester?"

"You ought to know, for you were one of the ushers."

"Oh, yes, I was, and the bridesmaid consigned to me kept whispering that she thought the whole thing was too sweet for anything. I thought it would have been a little sweeter if the bridegroom had not insisted upon putting a jet black toupe over his own sparce white hairs, and had worn teeth with a break or two in them. Those fearful tombstones hurt my eyes, they were so dazzling," King rattled on, although he remembered how his heart had ached that day, and that he had only acted because of the real friendship which had existed between his father and this old man, who was committing the folly of marrying a young wife.

"So the bride repents her of that day's work?" Litchfield asked, carelessly.

"Not she. Girls of her stamp marry for either wealth or position. She gets plenty of both, although she did not need money. His position is beyond question, but I hate to see a man whom my father honored, made a fool of," and King bit angrily on his cigar.

"She's jolly good company," laughed the Earl, a little consciously.

Litchfield again looked up quickly, and King's eyebrows came together, but neither said anything and the boy ran on:

"You aren't so far wrong, King, when you say I might marry her if she were free, and if I should tell you something, you would know that what I say isn't all——"

Litchfield's hand fell heavily upon the Earl's shoulder and he said, gravely:

"My boy, let a man a good many years older than you give you a little advice. Never boast of a lady's favors, no matter how small and insignificant they may be. You may do her much harm, and yourself no good. No, do not be offended. I knew that young lady before she was married, and I am sure she is quite as careless of conventionalities as Mrs. Fast, but oftentimes this girlish freedom of manner, simply indicates a very open nature, if a shallow one. We men have so much more freedom accorded us, that we ought to shield every woman, no matter what our private opinion, for the sake of those of her sex who are dear to us."

The young fellow stood, half abashed, before the grave, earnest words, at first looking angry, and then, holding out his hand, he said, bravely:

"You're right, and I'm a beastly cad. Still, I think perhaps I had better shield her by not allowing her to have any more opportunities to—to, well to give me a wrong idea of her."

"Yes; you had, and I beg your pardon for speaking to you as I did, Barnchester," Litchfield said, heartily, and after they had all talked for a few minutes upon indifferent subjects, King arose, and going up to the mantel, once more took up one of the Hongkong photographs, and standing so his face was in the shadow, said, in a low tone:

"A week ago I spoke to you two about a matter which lay very heavily upon me. I am sure you will sympathize with me when I tell you that a lady whose sweetness of disposition and nobility of character is seldom found, knowing everything, has consented to take the poor remnant of a heart I have to offer her, and that we expect to be married within two weeks."

Both young men shook him warmly by the hand, and he then continued:

"I feel as though I owed this young lady some apology, in having talked so freely about my other affair before you, and so I announce our engagement, and tell you that the remainder of my life is going to be spent in making her happy, and placing her first in my affections. Our marriage is going to be very quiet, as my mother's health is poor, and so I would take it as a favor if you would regard this as confidential."

"Of course, of course," the Earl said, impulsively, and Litchfield nodded, and then the former continued:

"Is it indiscreet to ask her name?"

"Certainly not. Her name is Queenie Phillips, my adopted sister, and when we return from our honeymoon, I will be very glad to present you to her. I must go now; excuse me, will you not?" and almost before the others knew it, he had left the room.

The Earl ran after his guest to see that he secured his hat and coat, and to grasp him again by the hand to wish him every happiness, although as he came back he was shaking his head.

"I say, Litchfield, I'm sorry about that."

"What?" Tom asked, raising his head, for he had been sitting, his chin resting on his hand.

"This marriage. King Wadsworth is one of nature's noblemen, and is just as courteous a gentleman as one would wish to see, but I tell you he was completely floored by that other affair, and he had no heart or affection, either, to give any woman."

"Perhaps you are right. I say, Geoffrey," calling the Earl by his Christian name for the first time, "did you understand him to say her name was Phillips?"

"Yes; I've heard her mentioned. She has been one of the belles of the place for several winters, for she must be twenty-three or four now. I've seen several of her pictures at the different houses where I visit. She has been out of town with her adopted mother, who had a close call last summer. Fancy a man falling in love with a girl he had grown up with! I can't imagine such a thing, can you?" The young fellow's laugh was full and hearty.

"Yes; I think I could imagine it," Tom replied, slowly, although his firm face betrayed none of the agony his heart felt at these idle words.

"Strange things happen in this world of ours. But your promise to me?"

"What promise, old man? Oh, yes, I remember. Do you think the mater will tell you what she won't her own son?" and again there came into the dark eyes an expression of suspicion, which the elder man noticed immediately, had seen before, for few things escaped his keen eyes.

Laying his hand, so like the slimmer one, upon the Earl's shoulder, he said, authoritatively:

"Geoffrey, do not look at me in that manner again, for you wrong both your mother and me. The Countess of Barnchester is a lovely lady, and one whom I admire. Fortunately, I have been able to be of a little service to her, fortunately to me, and I think I have some influence with her. I honestly believe you ought to have the information you are in search of, but you will never obtain it from her, and it will only annoy her to have you ask. Depend upon me, my dear boy, and you shall know the truth. Will you trust me?"

No one could look into that face, listen to that voice, and experience anything but the utmost confidence, and as he grasped Thomas Litchfield's hand, Geoffrey, Earl of Barnchester, cried, enthusiastically:

"I would trust you with everything I possess."

CHAPTER XVII.

"Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it."

As King opened the door upon his return home, a sweet, low voice cried:

"Oh, King, King, is that you?" and a tiny figure ran lightly down the stairs, and threw her arms about his neck before he had taken off his coat.

He smiled gently, although the keen eyes of love noticed the heavy shadow which always rested on his brow did not lift, and bending his head, he kissed the crimson lips. Why did he think of a horrible, crimson flower he had seen in India, whose touch was death? He shuddered slightly, but, catching her up in his arms, ran lightly up the stairs, and did not stop until he had seated her carefully in one of the great chairs in the library, for that room was a favorite one with them, always had been. Once more the idea of her extreme fragility worried him. Often he noticed her delicacy, and a great pang would almost overwhelm him. The hands, which she had so often condemned as coarse, were dainty enough now, so white and waxen were they, and he suddenly realized that Queenie always wore full, trailing gowns now. All of her close-fitting ones were discarded, and when had he seen her in evening attire?

With real concern, he bent over the little figure and said with a great yearning something tugging at his heart:

"My darling, you are not sick are you? Queenie, you look so frail and thin, positively thin, I am frightened."

The bright blue eyes looked up into his. Those eyes were alive. How they glowed and burned.

"My darling girl, if I should lose you! Come, little girl, I wish we were married now, and I would carry you off to a milder climate. Or come, let's us three, you, mamma, and I, go somewhere and we can be married elsewhere just as well as here."

The pale face was crimson now, as Queenie shook her head.

"No; I have a fancy to be married here in New York. So you would be worried and sad if I died, King?"

She was very sweet and childlike as she looked up at him, her blue eyes glowing with an earthly fire, and her golden hair like a crown of glory, and he had loved her dearly as a sister for many years.

"Queenie, I could not stand it," he whispered, he who had stood so much.

"Ah, King," she cried, clinging to him, and covering his hands with kisses before he could prevent her. "Ah, my King, such words as those would bring me back from my grave. I am all right now," with a tender look. "Perhaps I might have died of a wounded heart, just because my darling did not care for me, but now King, I'm the strongest woman in the world. As long as you need me, I will live, but when you tire of me, I will die," and the golden head dropped.

"I will never tire of you, dear; I never have."

"Can you forget?" the words came in a whisper.

"I am trying hard, hard, dear."

"You shall forget," she cried, her blue eyes glowing and flaming. "See, kiss me, kiss me," and, kneeling in the chair, she pressed her burning lips against his, and once more came that frightful memory of the great red flower whose breath was death. What was the matter with him? The little mouth was beautiful, rich colored, beautifully curved; what was it that made her mouth unkissable?

The little arms dropped by her sides, and she looked worn.

"No, King, you have not forgotten," she whispered.

The strong man stood, looking down at the fairy-like thing, kneeling like a child, her face raised toward his, and such mad, passionate love expressed in every feature. Why was it that he could not gather her to his heart, and respond to her love, which he believed to be as sweet and maidenly as any one's on earth? He hated himself for making her suffer, for allowing a dream of the past to stand between them, but he could not help it, he could not.

At last he broke the painful silence by saying, gently:

"Queenie, darling, I am trying; but love, as I said before, is something no one can control."

"I know, I know."

"Suppose now that one of our many acquaintances would come here, take you in his arms and kiss you, as I wish to God I could kiss you, how would you feel?"

The girl shrunk down in the cushioned depths of the chair, shuddering.

"Don't even suggest it; I would regard it as profanation."

"Well, darling," his voice was very low and gentle, but there was not the least suggestion of love in it.

"King, King, do you mean that you shrink from me that way? It is cruel, cruel. Listen, dear, I will not live long. No; I will not. You saw how exhausted I became just running down stairs. I went to see a doctor today. You will not be bothered with me long, but King, King, to think you regard me that way," and the pale face looked desperate.

This charming story will be continued in the next issue of the Ledger. Every subscriber is entitled to our free cameras and patterns as announced on pages thirteen and fifteen.

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"What was your greatest trial, Judge?" asked the young lawyer.

"Getting my seven daughters married off," replied the scanty-haired jurist.

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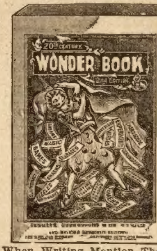

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A Maiden Reconsiders.

She—I shall have to refuse you again.

He—But this is positively the last time I shall propose.

She—Oh, well, that's different! Why didn't you say so?

The Food and the Man.

Church—Tell me what you eat, and I'll tell you what you are.

Gotham—Well, I eat hash at Mixum's restaurant.

Church—Then you're a fool.

Rose to the Occasion.

Archibald—Mamma give me a penny.

Mother—You're too big to be asking for pennies.

Archibald—Well, then, give me a quarter.

An Insignificant Guest.

Mammon—Did you attend the wedding?

Cupid—Yes; I was among the "also present."

The Colonel Saw.

Mrs. Kaintuck—I want to read you some quotations from the Bible. One in Genesis: "Let a little water, I pray you, be fetched." Here is another from Genesis: "Give me, I pray thee, a little water." And here is one from Kings:? "Fetch me, I pray thee, a little water, that I may drink."

Colonel Kaintuck—Yaas, I see. Even in those days they asked for only a little water.

A Near-Sighted Citizen.

Citizen (excitedly)—Officer, there is a dance hall open around the corner. I heard the music. And on Sunday night, too!

Policeman—You must be near-sighted. You can see by the bills at the front of the house that it isn't a dance hall. It's a sacred concert.

His Plans.

He—You know, my angel, it will have to be a case of love in a cottage.

She—That will be just heavenly. Where is the cottage?

He—Um—I haven't got the cottage yet. You see, I'm saving up money for a bicycle first; much cheaper than a horse, you know.

Wherein They Differ.

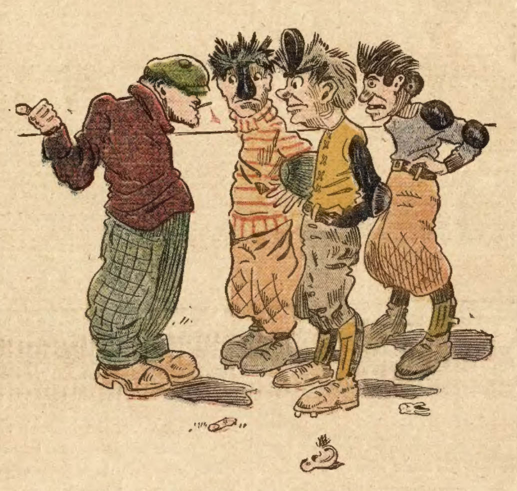
"In Norway," said the globe-trotter, "the legislature is called a storthing."

"In this neck of uncut timber," explained the St. Louis man, "it might be appropriately termed a sure-thing."

Real Danger.

She—Do you really believe that kissing is dangerous?

He—Well—er—I believe it sometimes results in a breach-of-promise suit.



Coach—That left tackle on the other side is stopping us from making any gains and we've got to put him out of the game. Here, you, center rush, the next scrimmage you get into watch your chance and give that left tackle two swift kicks in the stomach,

The Center Rush—But, say, that fellow is my brother.

The Coach—Oh, well, then, give him just one swift kick.

Never Touched Her.

Jimjones—I told Waggsby this morning that his trousers were too short and he said he wouldn't wear them any longer. Good joke, wasn't it? Ha, ha, ha!

Mrs. Jimjones—Yes; but what's he going to wear instead of trousers?

Beginning of the Season.

Myer—Yes, I understand young Kickley's head was split in the game.

Gyer—Ah! Sort of football opening, as it were.

Didn't Regret His Absence.

Skids—Did your friend, Chesterius McRanter, the tragedian, enjoy his vacation?

Scads—I can't say as to whether he enjoyed it or not, but the public did.

Couldn't Read Her Mind.

Maude—They say that the young man who has been calling on you for some time is a mind reader.

Clara—I don't believe it. If he was he would either propose or quit calling.

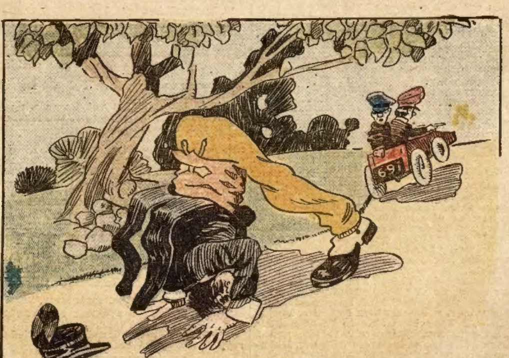
Pa's Theory.

Little Willie—Say, pa, isn't labor and work the same thing?

Pa—Not on your first reader, my son. A politician dearly loves to labor, but he positively will not work.

A Tip for Husbands.

This is the reason Solomon
  Was thought to be so wise—
He never bragged unto his wives
  About his mother's pies.



The Victim—Ha! ha! Those fiends shall pay for this. They think they're getting away, but I can see their number just as plain—one hundred and sixty-nine! Ha! ha!

Fixing the Limit.

The old farmer had reached the stage where it was necessary to comb his hair with a towel and, meandering into the village drug store, he said:

"Looky here, Mixer, yew indooced me tew blow in a dollar fer a bottle uv yore hair renooer a couple uv weeks ergo, an' it ain't did eny good nohow."

"That's strange," replied the druggist. "I never knew it to fail before. But one bottle is hardly a fair trial."

"Mebby it ain't," said the old man. "Yew can gimme a nuther bottle, but if that don't bring th' answer I'll never drink eny more uv th' pesky stuff, b'gosh!"

He Was Interested.

Wife—You seem to find something very interesting in that paper. What are you reading?

Husband—The Woman's Page.

"Wife—Well, I am glad you have at last awakened to the vast importance of woman's place in civilization.

Husband—Yes, indeed. I've struck some mighty fine cooking receipts.

Wife Works Wonders.

Little Wife (meditatively)—Do you think woman's suffrage would interfere with domestic happiness?

Husband (lovingly)—Not at all. The little duckie darlings who make domestic happiness wouldn't vote, anyhow.

Then she slipped off and wrote a letter resigning from the Vote or Die League.

It All Depends.

"How gratifying it must be," said the sentimental youth who had the matrimonial fever, "to be the owner of one's own little home."

"Yes, it's gratifying enough, I suppose," rejoined the man who had just failed in business, "but it's a whole lot safer to have one's wife own it."

A Nation of Inventors.

Foreign Visitor—To what do you ascribe the remarkable inventive ingenuity of Americans?

Host—Puritan mothers.

Foreign Visitor—I do not understand.

Host—A boy with that kind of a mother has got to cultivate his inventive faculties if he is going to have any fun.

Old As the Scissors.

"Telegraphing without wires is no new thing," remarked the gray-haired passenger.

"It isn't, eh?" queried the drummer.

"Not by a jugful," continued the old man. "Why, sir, when I published a country newspaper forty years ago I got nearly all my telegraph news that way."

No Fun Left.

Gothamite—What shall we do for amusement?

Guest—I should like to see something to make me laugh.

Gothamite—Too late in the season. The minstrels have closed, and the four hundred are out of town.

Her Thoughts.

Simkins—Your wife strikes me as being a very thoughtful woman.

Timkins—And she is. Why, you couldn't imagine half the things she thinks if I happen to be detained at the office till after midnight.

Friendly Tipp.

"But," persisted the would-be candidate for office, "I'm on the right track to get the nomination."

"You're on the right track, all right," replied the old politician, "but you're headed the wrong way."

As Compared.

"This table cloth," remarked the guest in a cheap restaurant, "reminds me of a county fair."

"In what respect?" asked the proprietor.

"It displays a little of everything," replied the party of the prelude.

Not Quick Enough.

Percy—Mamma, I can't count ten any more when I'm angry.

Mamma—Why not, dear?

Percy—Billy Atkins hit me with a stone, and before I counted six he had run away.

A Pitch Pipe.

Wife—What on earth are you pinching the baby for, John?

Husband (tuning his fiddle)—Keep still, darling. He was just up to high C when you interrupted.

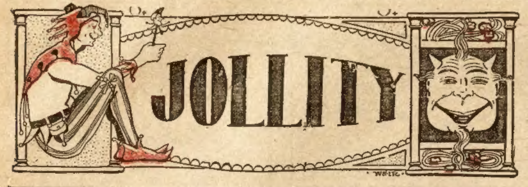
Asked and Answered.

"Doctor," said the cheap skate, who was looking for free advice, "if a man had the ague what would you advise him to do?"

"Shake it off," curtly answered the M. D.

In After Years.

"Your blush is like the roses red,"
  Said he, while courting the maiden sweet;
But after marriage he simply said:
  "Jane, your face is as red as a beet!"



Keeping Track.

"Won't you have another biscuit?" asked the hostess.

"No, thank you," she replied; "really, I don't know how many I have eaten already."

"I do," said little Robbie, eagerly; "you've ate seven. I've been counting."

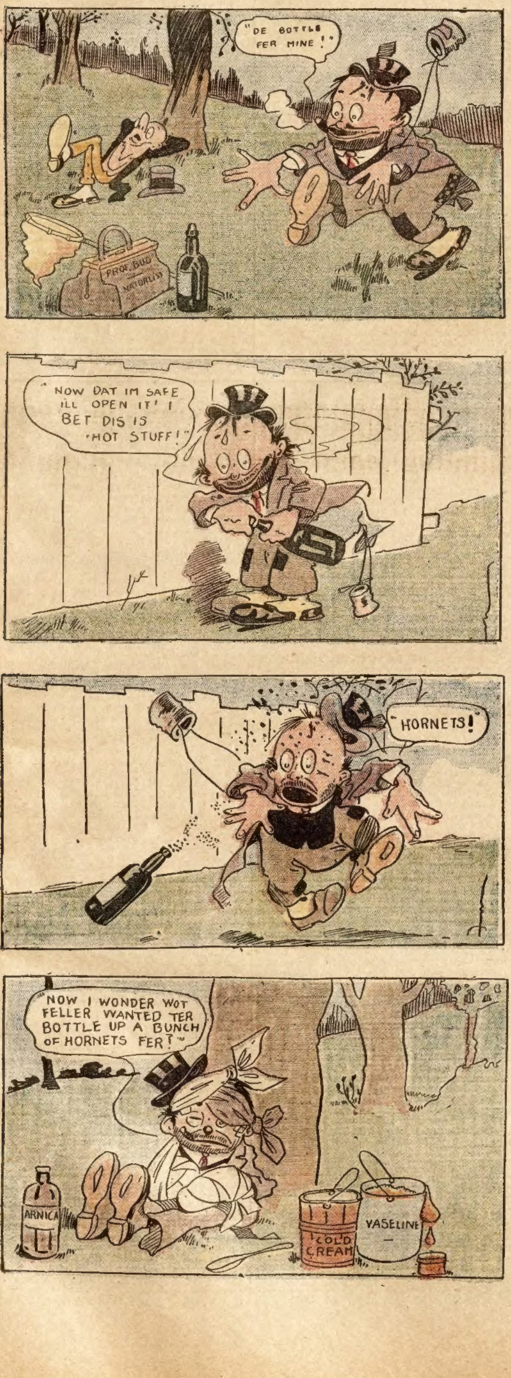
Precocious in Spots.

Bobby—Do I have to go to school again, mother?

Mother—Of course, Bobby.

Bobby—Why, mother, I heard you tell father last night that I knew entirely too much.

HOLD-UP HERBERT'S FIND.


"DE BOTTLE FER MINE!"
PROF. BUG NATURLIST
NOW DAT IM SAFE ILL OPEN IT' I BET DIS IS 'HOT STUFF!'
HORNETS!
NOW I WONDER WOT FELLER WANTED TER BOTTLE UP A BUNCH OF HORNETS FER?
ARNICA
COLD CREAM
VASELINE

Hans' Notice.

Residents of La Grange are deriving much amusement from an offer of a reward posted on the bulletin board of the postoffice. The notice was posted on permission of the postmaster by an honest Dutch farmer named Hans Bog, who lives a few miles out of town. Bog came to the postmaster in great trouble and asked for permission to put up a notice offering a reward for a calf which he had lost. On being given permission and a sheet of paper he wrote and posted up the following example of phonetic spelling:

RÖND A VAY.

"Von Ret and Vite Calf mit its to behind legs vas plack he vas a she Calf. Aney potty dot prings Dot Calf home pays me five Tollar.

HANS BOG
Tree Mile Behind de pridge
Bear Creek.

A Feathered Quadruped.

The natural history class was in full swing and the school teacher was manifesting his usual inquisitiveness.

"Willie Rowlands," he called, "what do we call a creature with two legs?"

"A biped, sir," said Willie.

"Name one."

"A man, sir."

"Good," was the flattering comment. "Now, are there any feathered bipeds?"

"Yes, sir; birds."

"That's right. Now, what is a quadruped?"

"A creature with four legs."

"Quite correct. Now, can you tell me if there are any feathered quadrupeds?"

"No—er—oh, yes, sir; I've just thought of one."

"Have you? What is it?"

"A feather bed, sir."

Tommy's Confession.

"Now, children," said the teacher, "let us see what you remember about the animal kingdom and the domestic animals that belong to it. You have named all the domestic animals but one. It has bristly hair, likes dirt, and is fond of getting into the mud." Miss Fanny looked expectantly around the room. "Can't you think, Tommy?" she asked encouragingly.

"Yes'm," was the shame-faced reply. "It's me."

Not Anxious for the Job.

"Dey's one consolation," said Brother Williams; "de devil is gwine to be chained for a thousand years!"

Brother Dickey was silent.

"Well, what you thinkin' 'bout now?"

"I wuz thinkin'," replied Brother Dickey, "dat I wouldn't like ter be one er de committee app'inted ter chain him!"

Small Boy Entertains His Uncle.

"Did Johnny entertain you nicely, Uncle Abner, while I was out?" asked the niece the old man was visiting.

"He did very well," was the rather constrained answer. "He spent most of the time making me promise to let him come to my funeral."

"Dear little fellow. He's so thoughtful!"

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The Boss Overruled.

Two men who had often discussed the proportion of husbands who were masters in their own homes formed a plan for deciding the matter to their satisfaction. They were to start with two horses and a chicken. If the first man met was proved to be the boss of his household, he was to have one of the horses; if his wife was the ruler, he was to have the chicken. They had not gone far when they came upon a farmer, and they put the question to him immediately. Dropping his rake and stretching himself to his full height of six feet, he replied that he was boss of everything for forty acres around, and he would like to see the woman who could order him in any way!

"Very well, sir," said one of the gentlemen; "we are glad to find a man who is the actual head of his home, and we are going to give you one of these horses in appreciation. Which do you prefer, the sorrel or the white horse?"

"Well," replied the farmer, "I don't know just yet which one of them is the best: they're both handy looking. I think I like that sorrel."

Then he edged off and went into the house. As he reappeared, a window was raised hurriedly, and a thin, clear voice called out:

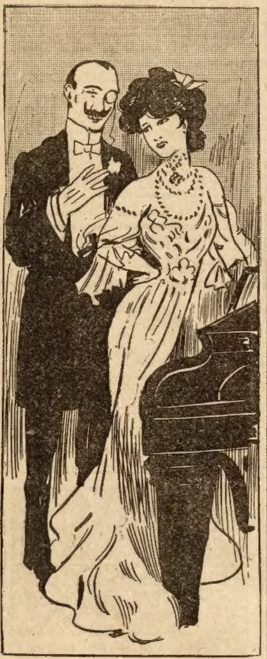
"John, you'd better take the white one."

The farmer began to look the animals over.

"Gentlemen," he said, with affected indifference, "I believe I've changed my mind. I'll take the white horse."

"You most certainly will not!" cried the two men in the same breath. "You will take the chicken!"

She Couldn't Tell Him.



Baron von Katsenjammer—Ach, fraulein, to me tell this with explanashuns. Your brudder, he ask me vere my castle was, undt I dells him in Shermany on der Rhine, undt he say, "No, I do nodt think your castle ist on der Rhine; I pet it ist on der Bumm." Explanashun this to me.

Josh Billings' Philosophy.

Thare is grate risk in being a comik philosopher. Nine-tenths ov the world will keep their eyes fast on the monkey and lose sight entirely ov the philosophy.

Lazyness iz as inkurable az a cancer, and will eat a man up about as fast.

Thare are only a few who git low enuff down to be despized by everyboddy, and thoze who do have tutched bottom.

Thare iz no living thing that kan stand the bitterness ov ridikule that iz just; it will make even a mule wince.

I never hav seen a woman yet (bless the dear creatures) who didn't hav a fust rate excuse for everything she had done, or had made up her mind to do.

Just kompare the things that are usephull, with the things that are kept for show, then strike the ballance, and you hav got the amount of common sense in this world.

Thare are a class ov people who trade in sekrets; they are a more suspishious set than the old junk dealers.

The grate fight iz fust for bread, then butter on the bread, and then sugar on the butter.

Don't parade yure misfortunes before the world; yu mite az well sho yure old sores and ask folks to pitty them.

Adam a Discoverer.

Teacher—Now, Harry, can you tell me who Adam was?

Harry (aged 5)—Yes: he was the fellow who discovered the world.

BORN IN MYSTERY;

Or, The Heiress of Claremont Hall.

By Libbie Sprague Phillips.

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Begun in No. 42, Oct. 17. Subscriptions can begin with that issue, or back copies can be procured from news stands, or our agents, or by mail from office of publication.

Her first thought on waking was of him. The incidents of the night before seemed like a sweet, half-bewildered dream. Was it all true? Ah, yes! There upon the table were the roses he had given her; there, too, in her heart was the strange, sweet sense of joy and peace.

Mrs. Remington looked in wonder at the radiant face that greeted her with such a bright, happy smile at the breakfast table.

"Late hours seem to agree with you, Miss Claremont," she said pleasantly; "you are blooming like a rose."

Marian laughed, and the look of intense joy deepened on her face, and thus happily was begun the day that was to end in despair and bitter tears.

Immediately after breakfast the postman arrived, and Mr. Remington, taking his letters and papers, retired to the library to read them, while Charlie ordered the horses brought to the door, and after the girls had donned their wraps, he assisted them into the sleigh, took his place beside them, and away they went, light hearted and joyous, for a sleigh-ride through the town.

Mrs. Remington, being left alone, busied herself for a while with a book, but, feeling worn out with the gaieties of the night before, she was presently dozing in her chair and was not awakened until some time after, when, on hearing the door suddenly thrown open, she looked up and saw her husband standing before her with a puzzled, agitated look on his dark face and an open letter in his hand.

"Read this letter which this morning's mail brought to me," he said excitedly, "and tell me what you think of it."

Mrs. Remington gave him a searching look, and, feeling that something unusual had happened, she took the letter and read:

"Mr. Remington:—I feel it my duty to inform you that you and your family are being imposed upon by an impostor. Marian Claremont is not what she seems. To tell the story plainly, she is not Major Claremont's grandchild at all, but the illegitimate child of an old farmer's daughter, Marian Blake, who died when she was born. She and Agnes Claremont had been intimate friends, and when she was dying she exacted a promise from Agnes that she would adopt her baby, but refuse to make known the name of its father. And as Dick Claremont, who had been dead four years, had once loved the girl who had, since his death, been led into sin, and from some sentimental notion which she had of being true to a promise she had made Dick before he died, that she would be kind to the girl he loved, she took the baby and gave it the shelter of her home and of her name. Any one in their native village will vouch for the truth of this story. ANONYMOUS."

For a moment after Mrs. Remington had finished reading the letter, she sat dazed and speechless.

Was it true? This girl who was so graciously charming, and of whom she had been so proud, an impostor—a child of shame and disgrace? It could not be possible! And a dark flush dyed her face as she thought of the boastful way in which she had spoken of her to her friends. What would they say when they heard this story? Then, as though the thought was too awful to dwell upon, she threw her head back and, tossing the letter aside, said, in a voice that trembled with indignation:

"I do not believe it!"

Mr. Remington sighed and moved uneasily in his chair.

"I have pondered over it all the morning," he said, "and I cannot understand it. I cannot imagine how any one would dare write such a story as that if it were not true; on the other hand, I cannot see how she has dared to pass herself as a daughter of Dick Claremont if she is not; besides, there is the resemblance to the Claremont family. If this story be true how do you account for that? I remember Dick Claremont's face, and this girl is his living image. That letter must be a foul, base, daring lie!"

Mrs. Remington picked up the letter and read it through again.

"Well," she said, in a hard, pitiless tone, "we must learn the truth of the matter at once. Charlie is becoming more and more in love with her every day, and, of course, if this story is true, a marriage between them cannot for a moment be even thought of; even their friendship must cease. I hope to goodness that the story will not become generally known! How every one would laugh! for I praised her in such a boastful way last night and spoke so highly of her family connections. Dear me! Who could have foreseen anything like this!"

And Mrs. Remington wiped tears of vexation from her eyes; but no feeling of pity entered her heart for the sweet young girl who was at that moment alighting from the sleigh at her door, looking radiantly happy as she gazed up at the window from which she was watching her, and wondering how and when it would be best to tell her the cruel story which the letter contained.

At luncheon the downcast look on Mr. Remington's face was noticed by all, and when, as they were about to leave the dining-room, he requested them all to join him in the library for a few minutes' talk, it was with feelings of wonder that they complied.

"I have received a letter," he said, as he seated himself by the table, "that has caused me much pain. It is an anonymous letter, and, like all letters of that class, contains a vile story, and the person whom the story concerns is Miss Claremont. The one who wrote it must be punished. I have, therefore, concluded to make its contents known to you all; Miss Claremont will doubtless have some idea who wrote it, and you, Charlie, will know how to deal with the offender."

Then he spread the letter on the table before him and began to read; and in the hushed silence of that room the words fell on Marian's listening ears like the knell of doom.

A strange faintness came over her; she tried to speak, but could not; yet her heart was in a tumult of inquiry as to who had done this cruel thing.

Then a low moan broke from her white lips, and, rising to her feet, she turned her wondering eyes about from first one face to another and in a broken voice asked:

"What does it all mean? Can no one tell me?"

"Of course, Miss Claremont," and Mr. Remington looked at her searchingly, "there is no truth in this story; it is a vile slander, nothing more. But have you any idea who wrote it?"

No truth in the story! She would have answered indignantly that there was none, but the letter had brought to her mind the words she had overheard a few weeks before, and over which she had often puzzled her mind: "Agnes Claremont was a fool when she took her as she did, giving her the shelter of her name as well as of her home." Merciful heaven! was the story true? Could it be possible that she had no right to the dear old name of which she had been so proud?

A great blinding mist came before her eyes, shutting out the faces on which the wondering looks had begun to deepen, and she would have fallen had it not been for the desperate grasp with which she clung to the chair.

"Charlie Remington sprang to her side and would have taken her in his arms, but his father, with a stern motion of his hand, waved him back.

"Let her speak!" he said; "we must know the truth of this story!"

"It is not true!" she gasped. "It cannot be true! And yet—oh! Ada—Lottie—some one tell me what it means, for—God help me!—I do not know!"

PART VII.

At this, Lottie Sherwood stepped forward. She felt that she must speak, for she, alone, of those present, knew the sad story; and in justice to all, Marian included, the exact truth of the story should be made known. And going to Marian's side, she placed both arms around her and drew her back into the chair.

"Sit down, Marian," she said, in a voice full of tears, "and I will explain it all. But you must be brave, Marian; promise that you will; for, Heaven help you, my dear friend, the story is, in a measure, true."

Marian did not cry out, as many would have done on hearing this, but gazed at Lottie in a dazed, helpless way, while a murmur of surprise and astonishment from the others rang through the room.

"And she has dared to——"

"Wait!" interrupted Lottie, "Mrs. Remington"—for it was she who had spoken—"I know what you would say, but Marian has not willfully deceived any one in this matter. She has never been told the true history of her birth, and has actually believed that she was Dick Claremont's daughter."

Then, folding her arms more closely about the trembling girl, she related to her astonished listeners, the story, as Agnes Claremont had told it to her.

Marian listened attentively, the awful pallor slowly deepening on her face; but she uttered no word, not the faintest sound escaped her lips. In after years her wonder was that the shock did not kill her.

The story was finished, but still she sat in dumb frozen silence, staring straight before her into space; a grave is what she saw—the grave of all her joys and glorious hopes. She moved presently and turned her eyes on the wonder-stricken faces before her, then, with a long, shivering sigh, she slipped from Lottie's arms, having fainted dead away.

Charlie Remington's love now conquered the fear which he had of displeasing his father, and darting forward he gathered the senseless form in his arms, and bearing her to a couch, placed her tenderly upon it.

The quivering eyelids opened at length, and a feeling of joy for a moment, thrilled through her bleeding heart as she saw Charlie's face bending anxiously above her.

"There! She is all right now," said Mrs. Remington, as she grasped Charlie's arm and tried to draw him away. "You had better leave the room at once. I will attend to the young lady."

Marian noticed, even then, that she did not say Miss Claremont, but spoke of her as the young lady. Ah! that was all the name she could lay claim to now; she had no other. And the deadly pain sesemed to lighten about her heart.

Charlie heeded not his mother's words; but kneeling by her side, he took her cold hands within his own, and in a voice choked with emotion, he said:

"Do not look like that, Marian! You must, as Lottie said, be brave. You have lost nothing but the Claremont name, and it may be that the one which is rightfully your own is in every way as good as the one which you have lost, just as honorable, just as grand, and some day we may learn what it is. But I will give you my name, darling, you——"

"Charlie!"

Mrs. Remington uttered that name with a piercing cry, and again she sought to draw him away.

But he heeded not the interruption. "You know I meant to ask you to share it," he continued, "I ask you to do so now, Marian. Will you be my wife—Marian Remington?"

Mrs. Remington was walking the floor now, wringing her hands and moaning over what she called the disgrace of it all; but Marian still lay white and trembling, and no sound came from her quivering lips.

"Be quiet!" commanded Mr. Remington, as he took his wife's arm and led her back to her chair. Then, turning to his son, he said:

"Charlie, you are saying that, which, after having considered the matter, you will regret. There is no proof that this girl has a name, and even could we discover that she has, it might prove to be one stained and blackened by shame and disgrace—possibly crime. But it appears to me that her mother was a disgraced and fallen woman. No dishonor can touch the mother that does not cast its shadow upon the child. The Remington name is a time-honored and a stainless one; have a care, my son, upon whom you bestow it."

Marian found her voice now. "Have no fear, Mr. Remington," she cried, "until the mystery of my birth is cleared up I shall marry no one. You say that if I have a name it may prove to be a sin-stained and blackened one; but you believe my mother to have been a disgraced and fallen woman. You say these bitter words in my presence, taking no thought of the fresh stab which they cannot fail to give to my already bleeding heart. I forgive you, Mr. Remington, but I shall never forget! It may be that time will reveal my father's name, and it may be just possible that it will prove to be a name as illustrious as your own, and as your son said a few moments ago, just as honorable—aye, and just as stainless! If that time ever comes, I shall remember this day and the slanderous words you said of my mother. You may not have meant to be unkind, but in your anxiety to save your name from being bestowed on one whom you deem unworthy to bear it, you have been cruelly inconsiderate. I am not a fool, and although I love your son, I never should have accepted his most generous offer. Had I done so, it would have been time enough then for your cutting words!

"Yes, Charlie," she continued, turning her white, sorrow-stricken face to him, "I love you, and since you have proved yourself to be truly noble and unselfish in your love for me, my love amounts almost to adoration; but I can never be your wife, Charlie, never!"

He was still kneeling by her side, holding her hands in his. He arose now and seated himself beside her.

"And you think that I will thus easily give you up!" he cried. "You have done no wrong; why should your life be blighted because of the sins of others? I tell you, Marian, it shall not be! I love you, I want you, and nothing shall part us—nothing! I will dare anything, brave anything, and defy anything that may rise between us, and in the end, the strength of my mighty love will conquer, and you will be mine—mine—mine!"

His voice had in it a ring of genuine earnestness, and all unmindful of the presence of others, he clasped her in his arms as though as he had said, he defied anything or any one to come between them.

"Can no one prevent that boy from making a fool of himself!" cried Mrs. Remington. "Ada, it was you who brought her here; see what you have done! You should have been more careful in forming a friendship with a stranger; you should have first inquired into her family history. Had you done so, all this would never have happened!"

Here Mrs. Remington broke into hysterical weeping, rocking herself to and fro in her chair and again moaning between her sobs about the "awful, awful disgrace."

"I cannot understand," replied Ada, in an indignant tone, "why this story never was told before? Why have the Claremonts kept both her and society in ignorance of the true history of her birth? They must have mighty faith in the greatness of the Claremont name if they thought that by bestowing it as a gift upon a nameless child, it would cover up the dark stain of dishonor."

Marian had freed herself from Charlie's arms while Ada was speaking, and with her eyes still dry and tearless, but with hopeless misery written on every feature of her expressive face, she arose to her feet and for just a moment she stood and gazed in silent wonder at the girl who had been her dearest friend. Not a word did she speak, but in that moment she realized to the fullest extent what she had lost. Not as Charlie had said, a name merely, but social position, friends, peace, joy and love—everything that made life worth living. Then rose before her the dim vista of years when her position would be that of an outcast—she who had reigned as queen. It was as great a fall as woman ever had. No words could describe the chaos of her thoughts. One hour before she had been the petted darling of a noble house, and as such she had been welcomed here among these people who prided themselves on the

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spotless history of their race. Now, what was she? An impostor, an intruder, an interloper, and—nameless! It seemed to her that she could see that word written all around her in letters of fire, that a thousand voices were hissing it in her ears.

Charlie again took her hand and sought to draw her back upon the sofa beside him.

"Ada," he said, reproachfully, "have you no pity for this girl whom you have loved, no sympathy to offer in this, the darkest hour of her life? If you have none, you can at least spare your reproaches. She is—"

"Don't, Charlie," Marian interrupted. "Heaven bless you for your kindness; yes, and for your love, for I know it to be a true, honest love although it can never be rewarded. But I realize my position, and I do not expect any sympathy from my friends. Ah! I have no friends—that is, none but Lottie. She knew my story, it seems, before she knew me, and despite my doubtful position, she has loved me."

And turning to Lottie Sherwood, she stretched out both trembling arms toward her, and the first cry that she had uttered broke from her lips.

"Oh, Lottie, take me home and let me die!"

That cry so full of wild, touching helpless pathos, pierced Charlie Remington's heart like a dagger.

"Father!" he cried, turning to the old man on whose face the dark frown had deepened, "this girl is all the world to me, and I expect to make her my wife in spite of all opposition; nothing can prevent my doing so; and I ask you to lay aside your false, foolish pride and make her still a welcome guest."

"My son, when you have grown calmer and have thought this matter over, you will then think and feel as I do. The ladies of the house of Remington have ever been above reproach, and no one whose family history is stained and sullied by shame and dishonor will ever be welcomed or recognized as a member of the household. I do not wish to be, or to seem unkind, and for slanderous words which I said a few moments ago of Miss Marian's mother, I humbly ask her pardon. I spoke hastily and thoughtlessly. She may have been a true woman, legally married. If this can be proven and if the name which the proof of this marriage will make known proves to be an honorable name, then I will give my consesnt to your marriage with this girl. Until then, I shall not give my consent, and if you marry her without it, you will be no longer regarded as a Remington; I shall disinherit you!"

"Very well; but she is dearer to me than name, wealth, position; dearer than all the world beside, my mind is made up; I shall not change it!"

Lottie Sherwood had wound her arms around the stricken girl and was now leading her from the room.

"Wait! Marian!" exclaimed Charlie, as he again grasped her hand. "I am more sorry than I can say that this unpleasant scene has been enacted, and I want to tell you that no matter what other changes may come to your life, my love will remain ever the same. If the veil of mystery with which your birth is shrouded is ever lifted and happiness is thus brought to you, I shall rejoice in your joy; on the other hand, should the lifting of that veil reveal nothing but an heritage of woe, I will share your grief. I do not intend to accept your refusal to be my wife as final. Since you have owned that you love me, I intend to beat down all opposition and make you mine; not even your own pride shall stand between us."

"But it must stand, Charlie; I love you too well to wish to drag you down to—"

"Stop! Nothing that you can say can alter my determination. And Lottie Sherwood, God bless you for the sisterly love which you have given her." Here he cast a look of reproach at his own sister who sat weeping silent tears of vexation and anger. "Let your kindness continue, Lottie; she will greatly need your friendship; promise me that it shall never fail!"

"I never desert my friends in trouble," she answered; "I shall not desert Marian."

"I believe you," Charlie replied. "I shall write to Major Claremont at once, and——"

"Charlie Remington, do you actually mean to defy your father and marry this nameless girl?" cried Mrs. Remington, suddenly rising and confronting him with a face white with anger. "Do you intend to disgrace us all? It will kill me! I shall die of grief and shame! I—oh! help! see!" and throwing up her hands, she dropped back into her chair in violent hysterics.

And during the excitement that followed Lottie and Marian left the room.

"Let us go home at once, Lottie," Marian said, as she wearily climbed the wide oaken stairs which led to her own room; "I do not think I could eat another mouthful in this house; it would choke me."

But we will have to stay until morning, Marian. There is a train from here at four o'clock, but at W———, where we change cars, we would have to stay all night, as there is no train from that place until eleven o'clock tomorrow."

Marian dropped into a chair by the window, and leaning her head on her hand, gazed with despairing eyes, on the beautiful world without, robed in its garment of glistening snow, and the calm peacefulness of the beautiful scene seemed to mock her bitter despair.

But Charlie Remington loved her. She held on to this thought as something precious. The cruel blow that had dashed from her her name, rank and position, had spared her his love, honest and true. No matter what changes time or chance might yet bring, nothing could ever steal from her the blissful consciousness that she was loved by this man and that his love would remain unchanged.

But even this sweet thought brought her pain. They could never be any nearer to each other than they were now; on this she had resolved and nothing could shake her determination. She loved him too well to mar his life and blight his prospects. She would never be his wife.

An interview with him now was what she dreaded most, for she dared not trust herself to his influence. While her heart was crushed and bleeding and crying aloud for love and sympathy and tenderness, how could she refuse to accept his love if he pleaded with her as she knew he would. Could she look into his dear face calmly, knowing that she was never to see him again? Could she bear the clasp of his hand, knowing that it was a long, an eternal farewell? No; she could not. Flight, therefore, was the only means by which she could save her lover and herself; flight before he could seek an interview with her.

The sound of horse's feet beneath the window now attracted her attention, and looking out, she saw Charlie mount his horse which the stable boy had just brought to the door, and ride rapidly down the street.

Now was her chance. "Lottie," she exclaimed, as she rose to her feet and threw open her trunk; "pack your things; we must leave here at once, even if we do have to remain at W—— all night. I would rather stay there a week than to wait here until morning. You saw Charlie Remington just now ride away from the house. He will be absent some time, I imagine, and we must be gone when he returns. You understand, Lottie? I cannot trust myself to see him again. If you love me, help me now and go with me at once!"

It was a sad ending to their visit; all the more so from the fact that, until now, it had been such an exceedingly joyous one. Lottie thought of this, and shrank from making such an immediate departure. True, Mr. and Mrs. Remington had been cruelly merciless and pitiless; not one word of comfort or sympathy had they given the innocent victim of fate. But pride of ancestry was a striking characteristic of them both, and there is something noble after all in the pride one may feel in an unblemished name and an honored race.

But one look at Marian's flushed face and trembling hands as she rolled her rich and costly dresses into unsightly bundles and thrust them into her trunk, convinced her that Marian had chosen the wisest course. And stepping to the door, she rang for one of the servants.

"Ask Mr. Remington," she said, "if he will kindly order the horses to convey us to the station at once; Miss Claremont has received bad news and we must go home immediately."

"What does this mean?" asked Ada, a few minutes later, as she rushed into the room where they were making hasty preparations to depart. "I can see no need of your leaving so hurriedly. Papa feels terribly hurt, and I——"

She paused suddenly, as though undecided as to what she had better say, and a confused look stole over her face as Marian gave her a searching glance.

Vain, selfish and proud, she certainly was, but she was not wholly heartless, and tears for a moment dimmed her eyes as she noted the drawn, haggard look on the beautiful face that had been so radiant with joy and happiness but one short hour before.

"I am so sorry, Marian," she began, "perhaps some time in the years to come——"

"Don't," interrupted Marian, "please spare your half-hearted sympathies and spare me. I do not feel that I can bear anything more. The future years stretch before me bare and desolate. I have nothing to look forward to but death—death will end all and I shall welcome it gladly."

Ada's heart really ached for the despairing girl, but no comforting words came to her lips. She could not assure her of her lasting friendship; her pride forbade that; and after another vain attempt to persuade them to wait at least until morning before leaving, she quietly withdrew.

The trunks were now packed, and after donning her hat and cloak, Marian seated herself at the table and hastily penned a note to her lover. It was a simple, noble renunciation of him for his own sake—a tender, loving, final farewell.

The horses were at the door and clinging to Lottie's arm, they followed the servants who carried the trunks, downstairs. In the hall below a few hurried, formal farewells were said, then they entered the sleigh and were driven rapidly to the station. When the coachman was about to return, Marian gave him the letter she had written to Charlie, and asked him to deliver it to him.

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CHAPTER XIII.
"I'M AFRAID HE WILL."

Lord Rustler was a small man with a pale face, fine brown eyes and regular features—a handsome little man who might have been gray-haired for aught that most of the people of Larnsville could say to the contrary, for they had known him since he was thirty and none of them could have testified that one of his hairs had whitened since then. He always wore his nearly white beard neatly trimmed and in these days dressed somewhat carelessly in clothing that was of good material and tailor-made and which, despite its superannuation, was rather more stylish than the ready-made clothes worn by most of the men round about, for its cut and fit were unexceptionable. Mrs. Rustler was a plump brunette of good proportions who wore good if not strictly up-to-date clothing, in a manner that gave it decided tone. If she had married almost any man except Rustler she would have been a good and sensible woman. It cost her many pangs to give the cold shoulder to many of the playmates of her childhood and many of the friends of her girlhood—for she was a native of the little burg between the two rivers—in a vain attempt to live up to her conception of her position as Lady Rustler of Larnsville. Her inherited honor, her true sense of the eternal fitness of things, rebelled bitterly at times. She felt that she was a pitiful flower shaded and dwarfed by a noxious weed. Her husband was the weed.

Mr. Lathers was a man of less education and of more common business ability and every-day horse sense than Lord Rustler. His ideals were insignificant when compared with those of Rustler, but his achievements were more certain and his pecuniary gains were tangible and convertible into the comforts and luxuries of life. He was a practical man of much shrewdness who considered Larnsville his lemon and meant to squeeze it dry.

Unlike Mrs. Rustler, Mrs. Lathers possessed little culture and education. She was tall, gawky and clammy, and she dressed and walked and talked as she imagined the superb creatures in the continued stories in the weekly story papers did. With such an elusive foundation, her manners were original and interesting if not charming. But no one who saw her ever forgot the story that she had been a hired girl before Lathers had undertaken to put her up in the world. At home she talked hoarsely, in her throat; in company she talked shrilly, in her nose, and her smile and dignity were ever contending for the occupancy of her face. As the mistress of Mr. Lathers' rather solidly equipped home she was a little out of her element, but she tried to make all who visited it believe that she had sacrificed much to live in it. Some of them believed it.

Mr. Lathers' haste to return to the store and the demands of Mr. Rustler's "busy evening" did not prevent their remaining in the Rustlers' parlor a little while after the departure of the Parkers to talk about several matters of importance to them, none of which received more attention from the two men than this easy conquest of Sam.

"Ah,' said Lord Rustler at length. "You've shaved that note too close, Lathers. You run no risk. It's perfectly good with Sam's mill and Lizy's farm back of it. You slice twenty-five per cent off of it, and Uncle Joel wouldn't think of taking more than twenty."

"Why didn't you get Uncle Joel to handle it, then?" asked Lathers.

"Why, I—I——"

"I'll tell you. You owe Uncle Joel so much that you'd be afraid he'd rake in the whole thing. Besides, it was I, not Uncle Joel, that gave you your chance at Sam Parker. Isn't that right?"

"What are you making it disagreeable for each other about?" asked Mrs. Rustler, approaching. "Well—I do declare if those Parkers aren't coming back!"

"Let me out the back way," said Mr. Lathers breathlessly. "I don't want to meet Parker again until I get the note out of my hands—he might want it back. Come, Sally!" he called to his wife, as he disappeared.

The Parkers had not come about the note—that was not troubling them yet. They had come on a more serious errand. The showmen had denied all knowledge of Benny. The Parkers had not found the boy and they believed, with Lem Shelton, that he was hidden somewhere about the outfit.

"You're the burgess o' this 'ere borough, Mr. Rustler," said Parker appealingly, "an' I want ye to git the chief of police an' go an' look up my boy. Them rascally circus chaps have got him an' they want to take him off an' make a play actor or an injer-rubber man out of him."

The burgess and the "chief" accompanied the Parkers to the show grounds and an exhaustive search was made for Benny. The boy was not to be found and no one of the many showmen and others whom Rustler and Mr. and Mrs. Parker and the "chief" questioned gave any information concerning him. There was no one, not even Bill Brand, who professed to have seen him since some time before noon.

"He'll turn up sooner or later," said Rustler sympathetically and reassuringly. "Don't you think he will, Mr. Brand?"

"I'm afraid—he—will," answered the ill-favored Bill, his face strangely white. "I mean, I guess likely he will, Mr. Rustler."

CHAPTER XIV.
"A BAD MAN ACTING FUNNY."

The Tunkers sympathized with the Parkers, and Zeb went here and there, making inquiries concerning the missing boy.

"I judge by Lem's story that Benny is bound to run away with the circus," averred Tunker, tipping his head to one side in his rather funny judicial way. "Admittin' that much, we must come to the conclusion that he'd hide or permit himself to be hid till ye give up the search so he could git off all right. D'ye foller me, Sam?"

"Yes—go on, Tunker."

"Wall, ef ther showmen are willin' to take 'im inter camp they're willin' to hide him. Ain't that so?"

"Likely," assented Parker.

"Now, a circus is a mighty cur'us institution, an' of course it 'ud have some cur'us hidin'-places. No kind of a search warrant 'ud enable us to discover them places, an' the thing fer us to do is to lay low and watch till the boy bobs up, don't ye think so, Mr. Rustler?"

"I do," answered the burgess.

"Don't you think so, friend Brand?"

"Don't I think what?" asked Bill Brand confusedly.

"I thought ye was onto my train, as Lady Washington said to Gin'ral Ethen Allen when she caught 'er gown on a carpet tack. What I said was—jist watch till Bennie bobs up. Ain't that the right plan?"

"Bobs up! Yes—I see. Bobs up! Oh, Lord! He will surely bob up!"

As he uttered these apparently disjointed sentences, Bill Brand's face took on a ghastly yellow hue.

"Wait till he bobs up!' Brand repeated. "I tell ye I wouldn't want to be the one to see it."

'To see what?" asked Rustler.

"Why—to see him bob up."

Brand closed his eyes and pressed his hands over them as if in a futile effort to shut out some horrid sight.

"You seem to be nervous, Mr. Brand," remarked Rustler, eyeing the now trembling man curiously.

"Drink," suggested Tunker in a voice that must have reached Brand's ears.

Mrs. Parker was eyeing Brand searchingly. She had heard much of his quarrelsome disposition and wondered that, drunk or sober, he did not show anger at Tunker's insinuation.

"What I'm drivin' at is this," Tunker went on earnestly. "Don't make no useless trouble tonight, but go to Baddison tomorrow. That's whar the show will be. Keep yer eye peeled for Bennie, an' ye'll likely see him before the day is far advanced. That's my advice. Take it or leave it.'

"And sensible advice it is," said Mr. Rustler. "Now, Mr. and Mrs. Parker, you go home right off and get some sleep if you can. Get up early and drive over to Baddison and see what you'll see. Better take young Lem Shelton with you. He's little and smart and he'll be able to get into some corners where a grown person can't go. He can see and hear as much as the biggest man on earth."

"But maybe a leetle watchin' out round here wouldn't do no harm tonight," suggested Mrs. Parker.

"Certainly not," assented the burgess. "Certainly not. I'll attend to that, Mrs. Parker—you may trust me, Mr. Parker—and no chance to find your boy will be overlooked. I will have the chief keep his eagle eye on the outfit. You know Burtiss Brown and you know that Pinkerton himself is not shrewder, more resolute or more efficient. Burt Brown, our chief, has the eye that never sleeps."

"I hate to go home not knowin' where my boy is," said Parker sadly.

"Well, go on," advised the burgess, "and when you get this far on your way to Baddison, in the morning, stop at my house and if Chief Brown can get his eye on your son you will find the boy there safe and sound."

The Parkers turned mournfully away and

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In case two or more persons are tied for one prize then the prize is equally divided. There is no guess work in this puzzle. It is simply a test of your ability to count figures correctly. Every figure is shown plainly but the figures are mixed up so that it takes a lot of patience and care in order to count them correctly. This contest closes Thursday evening, December 31st, at 5 p. m., and no answers sent after that time will be counted.

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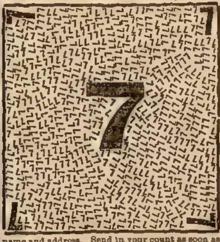

Every one entering this contest must send in 25 cents for a year's subscription, which entitles you to register one count in the contest. Or if you send 50 cents you will get four year's subscription to the WOMAN'S WORLD and be entitled to four counts. If you are already a subscriber you may enter the contest just the same, and your new subscription will be added to your present subscription. You can also get your friends to subscribe and increase your number of chances to win prizes.

By next nearest we mean the next nearest above or below the correct number. In case one person should send in a count of one more than actually correct and another sent in a count of one less than actually correct they would tie for the prize of next nearest, and so on with the next nearest. A tie for the prize means the prize will be divided equally among those who are tied for the prize.

The counts must be filled in on the blanks below. Write your count plainly, also your name and address. Send in your count as soon as you have made it. You may send in as many as you pay for according to the offer.

CONDITIONS.—Each person must count the number of 7s in this square and fill in the count in the proper space. For example, you will fill in "1st count 726," and if you send in four counts fill in the other spaces in the blank. No person employed by the WOMAN'S WORLD, or any resident of the city of Chicago is allowed to compete for the prizes. No one knows the number of 7s in the square. The count will not be made until after the first of January, 1904, when the figures will be counted by a committee and the correct answer will be given. Then all the counts sent in by subscribers will be compared and the prizes awarded. The paper and receipt will be sent as soon as possible. Remember that it takes some time to properly enter subscriptions, and to take care of the large mail we receive daily, so if you do not hear from us at once do not be alarmed. No counts will be changed after they are received by us. Remit by Post-office or Express order, or registered letter. Counts must be in our office before 5 p. m., December 31st, 1903. If you send 25 cents write your count in the first space. If you send 50 cents write a count in each of the four spaces. Twenty-five cents entitles you to one year's subscription and one count; 50 cents entitles you to four years' subscription and four counts. If you are already a subscriber your subscription will be extended. The subscription blank is made so that you can answer either for one or four counts. Cross out the word "four" if you send one count, or cross out the word "one" if you send four counts. Extra blanks will be furnished free upon request. Remember we are a responsible concern and that the prizes will be faithfully awarded; also remember there is no guess work about the matter. It is simply a test of patience and correctness.

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Each person answering this contest must fill in the blank below and state the number of figures in the square.

1	*Prize for correct answer*	$200
1	*Prize for nearest correct answer*	100
1	*Prize next nearest*	50
1	*Prize next nearest*	20
1	*Prize next nearest*	10
1240	*Prizes of presents average value each 50 cts.*	620
1245	*Prizes amounting to*	$1000

In case two or more persons send the same count and are entitled to a prize then the amount of the prize is divided equally.

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Street, P. O., or Rural Route...
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1st Count.	2nd Count.	3rd Count.	4th Count.

NOTE.—Simply write in your count in figures.

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in ten minutes, seated in their big wagon, were being hurried up the river road toward the Neoga mill as fast as two hungry horses could draw them. Mr. and Mrs. Tunker, who returned home with them, comforted them as well as they could and Zeb plumed himself not a little on the fact that his plan had received the indorsement of no less a personage than Lord Rustler. Lem was silent and thoughtful.

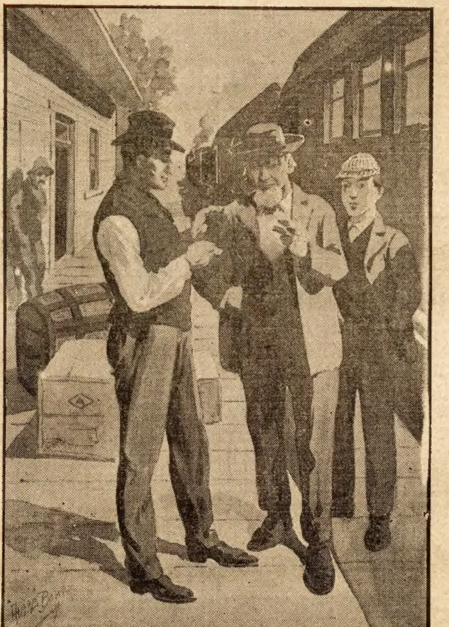
While Parker and Tunker were unhitching the horses from the wagon in front of the company barn, a rickety brown "democrat" wagon, drawn by a span of bay anatomical horses and filled with people, stopped to water at the trough by the roadside.

"What load is that?" asked Parker. "Somehow I can't well see."

"It's John Burdick's outfit. If some one 'ud scratch a match on the other side o' the hosses ye could see the blaze of it through 'em both. Thar's old John an' his wife 'n' their five kids an' Uncle George Van Gorden—can't ye hear 'im swear?—an' Hunter Herrick, the b'ar-killer, the man that hain't missed a circus in thirty years, an' Ike Brown, drunker'n a lord, as usual, an' last but not least, our friend and feller pilgrim, Bill Brand, b'ilin' drunk an' mad an' ugly accordin'. I s'pose he went up to the Doggett House after we come away."

"Ask 'em if they've seen anything o' my Bennie," said Sam.

"No, we hain't," answered Brand viciously when Tunker put the question to Burdick's party collectively. "Ain't an' do-o-n't want to, nohow. 'Twouldn't be pleasant to see 'im, I reckon. You don't want to see 'im, Sam Parker, 'n' ye better quit yer foolish lookin' fer 'im. I ain't never goin' to tell ye nothin' 'bout what become o' that boy. See?"



"Now," he said, "we'll make a comparison."

"What can he mean?" asked Parker.

"Nothin' sensible, I reckon," replied Tunker.

"What does Brand know about Bennie?" persisted Sam.

"Jist nothin', I calc'late," said Tunker reassuringly.

"I don't know about that," thought Lem Shelton. "Brand's a bad man an' he's actin' funny. He'll bear watchin'."

CHAPTER XV.
BARGAINING WITH DEITY.

Chief Brown did not see Bennie.

At 8 o'clock next morning, Sam Parker, Zeb Tunker and Lem Shelton arrived in Baddison, twenty-two miles from home, and Sam had his team put up at the American House barn.

"Come to see the show, I reckon?" suggested the landlord.

"Not exactly," replied Parker solemnly. Then he explained the object of this to him long and strange journey, for, with all of his faults of temperament and of business morality, he was a stay-at-home man. "We're jist goin' to watch round an' see if Bennie's with the show an' if he is he's a-goin' right back with me, an' likely," he added dryly, "he'll git a lickin'."

"The show ain't come in yet," said the landlord. "Train's due in half an hour now"—he was consulting a heavy German silver watch—"an' I'm goin' over to the depot, for the show folks is goin' to stop with me. You kin go along if ye want."

"Thank ye," said Sam huskily, for he was thinking more of Bennie than of the circus or of the landlord's watch, which the latter was studying intently.

"'Tain't lost a minute, not a single minute, in ten years," said the man admiringly. "Not a minute, an' I never forgot once to wind it. Why, sometimes the cars stop an' the conductors send up to me to git reg'lation on their time. Doc Brown wanted to git it to time some o' his famous surgical operations, but I wouldn't lis'en to that. If the sun an' this chronometer ever fail to agree it'll be the sun's fault—not the ticker's. Come in, you 'n' Mr. Lunkhead, an' have a drink, will ye? Then we'll calc'late on gitting' along over to the depot."

"Mr. Tunker, not Mr. Lunkhead. "Ye see," explained Parker, "Mr. Tunker is my boss—no, I mean I'm his boss—no, I mean he's my superintendent."

"Be you Sunday school folks?" asked the landlord suspiciously; "'cause if ye are——"

"I ain't—not much," answered Parker. "I never was a b'liever. Somehow, I always seem to git tangled up with the Trinity an' if other folks has three gods one god ain't enough for me."

"An' so ye hain't got any at all," said the tavern-keeper. "That it?"

"Yes—I calc'late that's how it is," was Parker's somewhat hesitating answer.

"Parker?"

Zeb Tunker was standing with his head tipped to one side, and Parker knew that he was about to say something.

"Wall, Zeb."

"Parker, ye've got a God, an' he's willin' to own ye, Sam, even you, but ye won't own Him nohow. His offerin' ye life eternal, Sam, an' ye won't reach out yer hand an' take it. Yer fixin' up a lot o' trouble fer yerself. Yer continerly in the fryin'-pan o' worldly sin an' trouble an' byme-by ye'll git dumped awful sudden into the fire o' etarnal punishment—then ye'll wish ye'd had a little more time to lis'en to God an' me."

Parker looked troubled. His face was red, his eyes shifted unsteadily and his features were working convulsively. It was evident that he did not like to have Tunker talk to him in the way he had done before a stranger. Yet it was not altogether plain that he was greatly displeased at what Tunker had said. When he spoke it was first to the tavern-keeper:

"No, Mr. Larkins, I guess I won't take no licker today. I usually do on circus days, Fourth o' Julys, an' sich—I usually do, but today I'm worried—worried."

"I s'pose so, Mr. Parker," said the landlord sympathetically, "but thar's nothin' so good as good red licker to cover worry all up. I've got some in thar that was captured in old Charley Sherrey's cellar six years ago, down to the Post, when he 'n' Doc Butler was sent up for counterfeitin', an' dear knows how old 'twas then. Ye remember, Doc's gal was let off on account o' her bein' a young woman. She did some o' the signin', though."

"Yes, I've heard all about that, but that don't make me dry. Old Charley an' Doc an' all their counterfeitin' an' cattle and hoss-stealin' gang was drinkers. I ain't a goin' to drink any whisky today, landlord, an' I'll tell ye one thing, Zeb Tunker, if ye'll step over this way. Never was my style to talk sacred an' private matters over in public."

"D'ye call me the public?" asked Larkins, laughing.

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"Ye keep a public house an' yer a public man," said Sam.

Zeb Tunker and Lem followed Parker a rod or two toward the street, and then Sam turned and said earnestly:

"If the Lord lets me find my boy today, Zeb, I'll foller Him from now on. If He don't let me find Bennie, I sha'n't never have no use for Him. That's all."

"I wonder if he means that," thought Lem. "I can't imagine Sam Parker prayin' an' talkin' in meetin'."

As for Zeb Tunker, he brought his right ear and his right shoulder almost together, and, saying no word aloud, thought and prayed:

"This is a decisive day in this sinner's life. Oh, Lord, if it be thy will, grant him his wish and take him at his word. Amen."

After a little he said half-pityingly and as if to prepare Sam for a blow that might follow him that day:

"Mr. Parker," Sam stared at him quizzically out of tear-dimmed eyes, evidently surprised at the unwonted formality of his address, "Mr. Parker," Zeb repeated, "I never heard o' the Lord makin' a bargain with no man for his soul, but I'm hopin' an' prayin' things'll come your way today."

"If they don't I'm liable to cut up pretty rough from now on. I hope the Lord won't tempt me."

"Temptations come not from the Lord, but from the devil," said Tunker. "Yer takin' a wrong stand."

"Well——"

"Come on an' drink or stay an' go dry—it's all one to me if you fellers are suited," called out the landlord. "As for me, I'm goin' to have a swig an' then we'll go to the depot. Jist be easy, gents."

Larkins went into his hostelry and soon returned wiping his lips and rubbing his vest over his stomach. Without any further talk the three men and the dog set out for the station. Half the population of the little hill-encompassed village was there and the arrival and unloading of the circus were exciting events.

Almost the first man who got off the train was the one whom Lem suspected of having coaxed Bennie away.

He passed the boy with a nod of recognition and approached Parker and said bluntly:

"I saw your watch-chain at Larnsville yesterday. Now I want to look closer at it."

"My chain!" thought Lem. "Mine, not Sam's."

CHAPTER XVI.

THE CHAIN—SIM BOWERS.

The chain that had attracted the stranger's attention was the same that had come to Sam Parker with Lem and which the millman had appropriated and wore as a watch-chain when he had company or went away from home. As has been intimated, Parker had so long called the boy's chain his own that he had fondly hoped the latter had lost all knowledge of his ownership of it. As has been seen, this hope was not to be realized by the lumberman.

"Wall, stranger," replied Parker, looking at the man suspiciously. "No 'bjections to yer seein' the chain—none at all—that is, if ye leave it on my waistcoat."

The man laughed.

"Worry not," he said. "I am not a robber, if I do travel with a circus."

He lifted the slack portion of the chain and examined it carefully and with growing interest.

"I think I've seen that before," he said.

Lem was all attention. Perhaps the man could solve for him the mystery of his identity.

"D'ye think so?" asked Sam. "I don't reckon ye ever have, though."

"I think I can prove to you that you are wearing a chain that once I was quite familiar with."

"Go on. The provin's on you!"

Lem and Tunker drew nearer to Parker and the showman.

"There's an end of this chain that's concealed under your vest," asserted the man.

"Thar is—sure."

"And it is broken."

"Yes," thought Lem. "It is broken. I remember that."

"Yer right, stranger," assented Sam a little hesitatingly.

"Let me see that end of the chain."

Parker pulled the concealed portion of the chain from beneath his vest and the stranger inspected it closely.

"Yes," the latter said. "Here is the broken link.

"That's right," said Parker.

Lem and Tunker kept silence.

The boy was eagerly awaiting developments. He felt that, for him, so much was at stake that he could not afford to risk any part of it through injudicious speech.

The stranger produced a long wallet from an inside breast pocket of his coat, and from it he took a piece of gold chain of the same curious pattern as the chain which Sam Parker wore.

"Now," he said, "we'll make a comparison. See here."

The broken link on his piece of chain and that on Parker's watch-chain matched exactly.

"What d'ye say now?" as asked triumphantly.

"Looks like a good fit," said Parker slowly. "But maybe——"

"It's an exact fit and match," broke in Tunker wonderingly.

Parker looked at Tunker half reproachfully.

"I ain't ready to give ye the chain yet, Mister," he declared eagerly.

"It may not belong to me, and then again it may," said the man calculatingly. "Does it belong to you, Mr. Parker?"

"Whose chain would I be wearin'?" asked Parker evasively.

"You might be wearing only your own," the stranger answered, "or you might be wearing most anybody's, or you might be wearing Mary Shelton's. Is it yours now, Mr. Parker?"

"Mary Shelton!" exclaimed Lem eagerly. "Who was Mary Shelton?"

"Don't be impudent, Lem!" commanded Parker sternly. "Boys mustn't be askin' men sich questions. Now you keep yer jaw out o' older folks' talk or it'll be the wuss fer yer."

"Is the boy your son?" asked the stranger, taking Lem by the hand and leading him a step or two toward Parker.

Parker hesitated a little, then said:

"Yes, sir, he is."

"Sure?"

"Cert'nly."

The man turned again toward Lem.

"What have you to say?" he asked. "Is Mr. Parker your father?"

"'It's a wise child that knows its own father,'" quoted Tunker earnestly.

The showman laughed and released his hold on Lem's hand

Parker reached out and drew Lem to him.

"Lem," he said quickly, "you run along down the track, side o' the train, an' look into all the cars ye can. Likely's not Bennie's a-hidin' thar some'r's. Run, now, an' don't miss seein' nothin' wuth lookin' at."

He sent Lem on his way with a swift, hard push that at once put the boy out of the stranger's reach.

"Now you, Tunker, go along the other side o' the cars an' look fer my boy—that's what we come over here fer—not to answer this chap's imperdent questions. Go on, Tunker, yer workin' fer me, ain't ye?"

"Yes,' answered Tunker.

"An' ye consider yer pay's a-goin' right along, don't ye, even if ye be chasin' up a circus instead o' filin' saws an' bossin' sawyers?"

"I hadn't thought anything 'bout that," added Tunker. "I'd help me in such a matter as this, pay or no pay, Sam Parker, or any other neighbor. I guess we won't talk nothin' about the wages. I'll just hurry along an' do as ye suggest."

"All right. Thank 'e, Zeb. I ain't a-goin' to forget yer friendship."

In a moment Parker and the stranger were alone. Parker was rearranging the part of the chain that was attached to his vest. The stranger was still looking at the piece he held.

"Parker," said the man again, "is that boy your son?"

"Yes," said the lumberman.

"If you're lying I'll find it out," replied the man unpleasantly, "and it may not be a good thing for you. Do you know who I am, Mr. Parker?"

"No, I don't," answered Parker.

"I'm Sim Bowers."

"Sim Bowers?"

"Yes."

"Brother to Joe?"

The man laughed again.

"Brother to Joe and Ike Bowers?"

"Friends o' yours?" asked Bowers.

"Famous men—that is, in song," said Parker, then he sang, nervously but not unmusically:

> "'My name it is Joe Bowers—
> I have a brother Ike—
> I came from old Missouri,
> All the way from Pike.
> I'll tell ye why I left thar
> And how I came to roam——'"

"Never mind the rest," interrupted Sim Bowers. "I've heard that song a good many times, and I never heard it sung worse. I belong to another branch of the Bowers family, but I'm from Missouri, too, an' can't be fooled like Joe was. I'm goin' to find out about that boy."

"Find out, then!" snapped Parker. "I want to find out about my boy that you or some o' yer pals coaxed away from Larnsville yisterday."

"Find out, then!" snarled Sim Bowers as he passed on toward the center of the little town.

Lem came back soon, tired and breathless. He had run, hoping to return before Sam and the stranger had parted company.

"Lem!" cried Parker angrily, "if ye see that man ag'in an' he asks ye any questions an' ye don't tell 'im yer my real son, instead o' my adopted son, I'll strap ye till ye can't walk. I mean that! Put it in yer pipe an' smoke it."

"I'm surprised this is so much more important to ye than findin' Bennie," answered Lem. "Ye hain't asked if I found out anything about' im."

"Well, did ye?" asked Parker.

This capital story of boyish adventures will be continued in next week's Ledger. If any reader desires our free cameras or patterns they have only to note our advertisement on pages thirteen and fifteen to find out how they may get them.

Cleopatra's Necklace.

(Continued from page five.)

"Even if I should explain you would not believe me."

"You have never tried me, Miss Jansen. By the way, you have never told me about Mrs. Marlowe's last hours. Did she say nothing about the prodigal who entered her room that night and who sneaked out of it during your absence and crept down the back stairway?"

"I see you know something about his homecoming."

"And so do you."

I leaned forward a little and looked fairly into the imperturbable face before me.

"I heard you accuse him of being home that night, and when he came toward you you threatened him with a dagger."

"And he saved himself by stopping when he did," she exclaimed.

"But to go back. Did Mrs. Marlowe during her last moment refer to her son's visit? I will put it another way, Miss Jansen——"

But Ruth Jansen rose hurriedly and held up her hand.

"You can stop right where you are, Mr. Tellfair," she said coolly. "I reveal no secrets of the death-bed."

"Very well. Then I will carry out my purpose. Then I will bring the crimes home to the scapegrace who came home to kill and steal."

In a moment the fury of the woman before me broke out like a resistless flood.

"You will do that, will you?" she cried, her hands clenched and her face absolutely colorless. "You have no proof. You may know of his home-coming, but that is all."

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"I know more. He came out of that room with jewels in his hands."

"You are right, he did," she said.

"And his mother died by violence that night."

"That is true."

She was speaking with remarkable coolness, and as I looked at her she seemed to increase an inch in stature.

"Then," said I, trying her still further, "I will follow him across the sea. There is no escape for him. You are the best witness I want. I thank you, Miss Jansen."

"What have I done?"

"You have fastened the crime on Sydney Marlowe."

"My God!"

It was all plain then; this haughty girl loved the disinherited man. I had suspected it only within the last few hours, but now I knew that it was true."

"Do you mean that, Tracy Tellfair?"

"Every word of it!"

"I have lied—lied!" she broke forth. "I did not see him come out of that room. I accused him wrongly in the house when you saw us in the library. I was only trying him, nothing more. Why don't you look elsewhere for the missing jewels? Must you ever look toward Sydney Marlowe? Why don't you ask Veronica Harcourt what she did in Marble House that night? I won't keep her secrets much longer if you persist in your course. Go and ask her to tell the truth. But you can't in this country. She sailed this morning for Europe. Escaped you nicely—ha! ha! ha!"

I started. Mrs. Harcourt gone to Europe? I felt that my trail must end on the other side of the sea.

Another installment of this highly dramatic story will be offered Ledger readers in next week's issue. Any one desiring the Ledger's free cameras or patterns will find our announcement on pages thirteen and fifteen.

No Exception.

Scribbles—There's not a page of the Weekly Terror that isn't filled with crime.

Dribbles—How about the funny page?

Scribbles—Same there. It is filled with thefts.

As Explained.

Maiden Aunt—How did you come to call the baby William?

Fond Mother—After his father.

Maiden Aunt—Why, his name is John!

Fond Mother—Yes, but he's bilious.

◆

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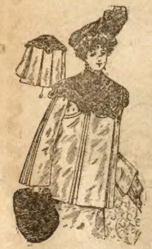
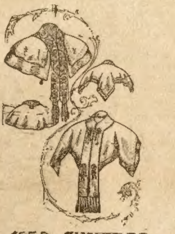
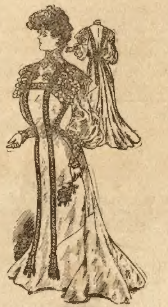


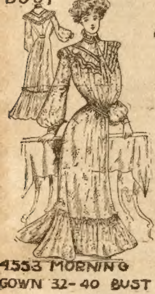
4554 COAT WITH CAPE COLLAR 32-40 BUST



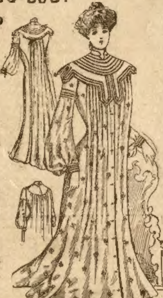
4552 SHOULDER CAPES 32-36-40 BUST



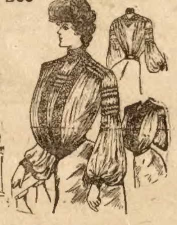
4556 PRINCESS GOWN 32-40 BUST



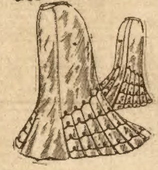
4553 MORNING GOWN 32-40 BUST



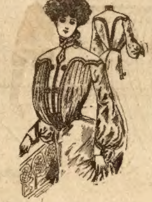
4478 HOUSE GOWN 32-42 BUST



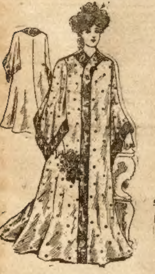
4473 SHIRRED WAIST 32-40 BUST



4545 THREE PIECE SKIRT 22-30 WAIST



4546 BLOUSE WAIST 32-40 BUST



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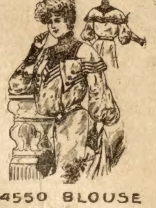
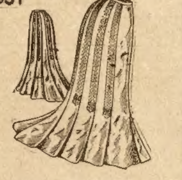
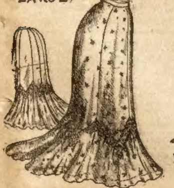


4550 BLOUSE WAIST 32-40 BUST



4551 PLAITED SKIRT 22-32 WAIST



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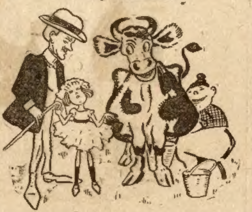
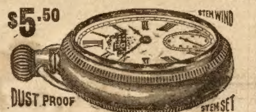


Said a dear little maiden named Kate,
I know why that cow's so sedate;
She gives that sweet smile,
Because she's in style—
She's sure that her horns are on straight.



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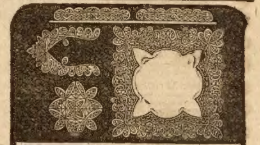

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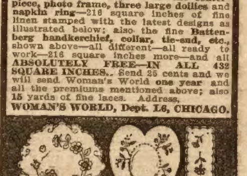

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FOR YOUTHFUL EYES

Mr. Nobody.

Oh, who is Mr. Nobody, and whither does he roam?
I've often tried to find him, but he never is at home.
Some say he's young and mischievous, and others fierce and grim;
I mean to search him out and have a little talk with him.

Who was it lost my pencil case, and broke a cup last night?
Who rubbed my "home work" off my slate when every sum was right?
It was not all the pussy cat, though playful she may be;
Oh, no! I'm pretty sure of this—'twas Mr. Nobody.

Who was it when the wind was high and all the house was still,
Came to my window in the dark and shook it with a will?
It really gave me quite a shock, for no one could I see,
There's not a doubt about it—it was Mr. Nobody.

'Tis said by those who know him, tho' his naughty ways they rue,
There's one point in his favor, and I half believe it's true:
That when you're out of temper and as sulky as can be,
The only friend you have at hand is Mr. Nobody.

Boys Sold in Slavery.

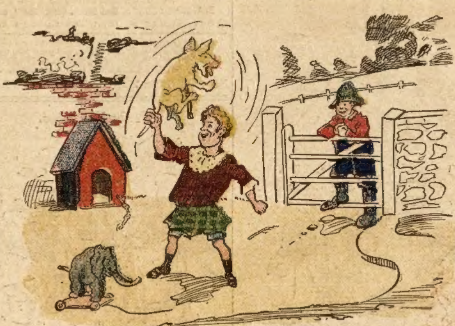
Slavery is one of the peculiar institutions of the Flowery Empire, but it is a different kind of slavery from that which formerly existed in this country. In China every member of a family is property and may be sold voluntarily or seized for debt. Contracts are held sacred among the Chinese, and whatever is promised must be performed. A father may sell his son—and this is the despairing Celestial's last resort. It is being done now daily in the province of Kwang Si, where the people are starving.

The Chinaman sells a son in order to save the life of the boy and the rest of the family. If afterward the father's circumstances improve he can buy the boy back again, usually at some advance. It is not considered disgraceful, but rather an act of humanity, to buy children in China, as otherwise the parents, as a last resort, must let them die by the roadside.

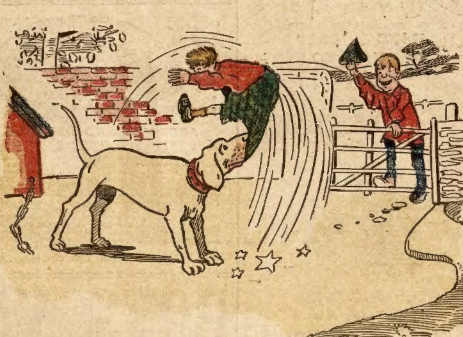
Can Bees Talk.

It is not easy to set bounds to the intelligence of the busy bee. They are as everybody knows, splendid builders and skillful travelers. But have they a means of communicating with each other? One observer says that every hive of bees has a sign or password which is known only to them. Lord Avebury seems to think there is something in the notion. It is supposed that the chief use of such a signal is to prevent the admission of strangers into a hive not their own.

PUP GETS EVEN.



When Bob was a babe,
He toyed with the pup,



When pup became dog,
He shook Robert up.

Deep Waters.

A little more than thirty miles from the coast of Japan the Pacific Ocean has been found to be more than five miles deep. Some officers who were surveying for a telegraph cable, found their wire broke at this depth without reaching bottom. This is said to be the deepest sounding ever made, and so deep that the two highest mountains in Japan, placed one over the other in this abyss, would have the summit of the upper one two-thirds of a mile below the surface of the water.

A Dead Loss.

Johnny—Do they have elephants in Asia?
Papa—Oh, yes.
Johnny—Do they have circuses in Asia?
Papa—N-o-o-o, I think not.
Johnny—Well, what's the use of having elephants if they don't have circuses?

Eskimo dogs have been driven forty-five miles over the ice in five hours. A picked team of these dogs once traveled six miles in twenty-eight minutes.

What is Catarrh?

If You Have Any of the Following Symptoms Send Your Name and Address Today.

Is your breath foul? Is your voice husky? Is your nose stopped? Do you snore at night? Do you sneeze a great deal? Do you have frequent pains in the forehead? Do you have pains across the eyes? Are you losing your sense of smell? Is there a dropping in the throat? Are you losing your sense of taste? Are you gradually getting deaf? Do you hear buzzing sounds? Do you have ringing in the ears? Do you suffer with nausea of the stomach? Is there a constant bad taste in the mouth? Do you have a hacking cough? Do you cough at night? Do you take cold easily? If so, you have catarrh.

Catarrh is not only dangerous in this way, but it causes ulcerations, death and decay of bones, loss of thinking and reasoning power, kills ambition and energy, often causes loss of appetite, indigestion, dyspepsia, raw throat and reaches to general debility, idiocy and insanity. It needs attention at once. Cure it with Gauss' Catarrh Cure. It is a quick, radical, permanent cure, because it rids the system of the poison germs that cause catarrh.

In order to prove to all who are suffering from this dangerous and loathsome disease that Gauss' Catarrh Cure will actually cure any case of catarrh quickly, I will send a trial package by mail free of all cost. Send us your name and address to-day and the treatment will be sent you by return mail. Try it. It will positively cure so that you will be welcomed instead of shunned by your friends. Write to-day, you may forget it to-morrow. C. E. GAUSS, 1849 Main St., Marshall, Mich.

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Pasturage the Year 'Round.
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